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MAY 1992

WIZARD©

No. 9

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

WittMan 91

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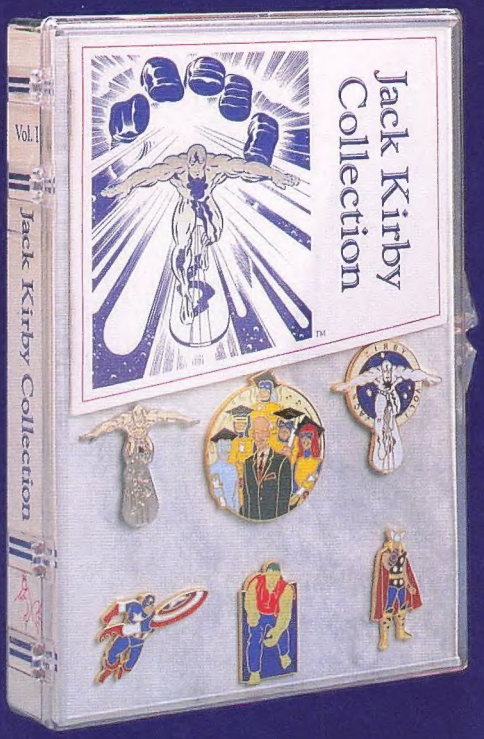

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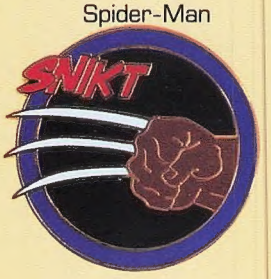

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WIZARD

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May 1992

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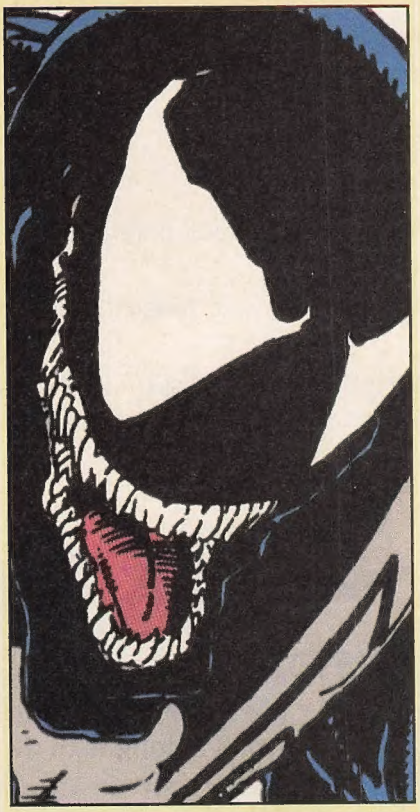

TOP STORY

VENOM - one of Marvel's hottest characters has the honor of being the first villain on our cover. Venom can be found harassing everyone's favorite web-slinger in the pages of the Amazing Spider-Man, and popping up all over the Marvel Universe.

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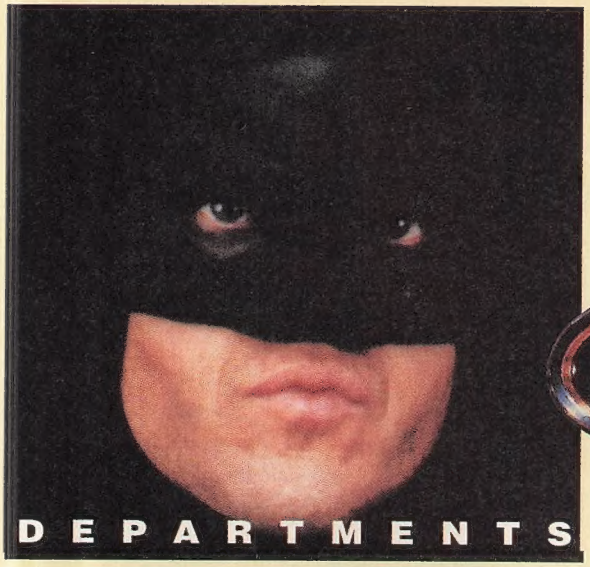

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A Letter From Our Publisher

Gareb's brief, but friendly brush with Death.

Whoa! That's all I could say!

On January 27, 1992, Fed-Ex delivered an oversized package. I was so excited, I ran to get a knife to open it and see what was inside. I love getting packages. I cut a small hole in the box and the scent of fresh airbrush paint came flying throught the air, so I cut faster. That's when I said "whoa!" This Venom piece knocked me to the floor. I knew #9 was going to be a killer.

So when I sent around flyers this month, I decided to tease everyone and not show them this masterpiece. I don't think I'll do that again. I received floods of mail asking what the cover looked like and who drew it (which I, 'till this day, have kept a mystery).

So I ask you, have we let you down? We've filled this issue with lots of cool stuff to read. I even flew out to L.A. to personally bring back the interview Alex and I did with the new Image Press. What a fantasy! We were out in Malibu, right on the beach, with Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Erik Larsen, Mark Silvestri, Hank Kanalz and Jim Valentino! I could kick myself for not bringing comics to get autographed.

Valiant has also brought us some really big crossover news with "Unity," so make sure you check it out.

Wait a minute...some great news (how could I forget?)...we've got a look at the new Toy Biz figures and Marvel Series III cards. Don't miss it! I sure didn't.

Truly Yours,

Gareb S. Shamus '92
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A Letter From Our Editor

The Golden Age of Comics?

Where will the future readers of comics come from? The question comes to mind as I personally reach my fortieth birthday. (Yeah, the editor of this magazine is perilously close to being considered middle age.)

I, and those comics fans of my approximate age, started reading comics in the days when every news stand, every drugstore, every corner candy store carried comics as a regular part of their stock. As I grew older, it became harder and harder to find comics in those places. By the time I was in college, today's direct market was in its infancy and comics moved from being a mass market item to being a collector's hobby, available—as a general rule—only in specialty shops.

So, what's the problem, you ask? The comics are still out there, right? Well, yes—but not in the place where seven- and eight-year-olds can find them, without parental help. I found comics at that age in places I passed on my way back and forth to school or friends' houses. Today, unless the local comics shop happens to be between home and school, buying comics requires a special trip...maybe even to a mall or shopping center that requires Mom or Dad to come along. In some parts of the country, it might even mean a trip to the next town, or the county seat, or the nearest big city.

And, when kids do find comics, what's in them? Do any of Wizard's readers really think Lobo, or Punisher or most of Wolverine's adventures, are suitable reading for pre-teens? I have a six-year-old son...and I'm sure as shootin' not going to hand him those characters to read. Marvel made an abortive attempt to launch a kids' line a few years back—the last remaining title in that line, ALF, was cancelled a few months back. DC's Impact line was touted as being aimed at the new reader; many of those titles might well work—if the new readers could find them.

It's a two-edged sword...the major mainstream publishers are producing precious little to attract younger readers—and what does come out is largely inaccessible to them, because of the industry's near total dependence on the direct market for distribution.

Disney Comics should have been a beginning to the solution of this problem...but when the books were less than successful in the direct market (and who would have expected anything else?), Disney's higher-ups apparently got cold feet and "imploded" the line. If Disney, of all companies, wasn't willing to lose a little money for a few years as it established an audience, who will be?

Someone once said the Golden Age of science fiction is ten. The same could be said for comics. I worry that my sons and their classmates and all the children who follow them will lose out on their own Golden Age of comics, because the publishers and retailers have abandoned them as a viable market.

-Patrick Daniel O'Neill

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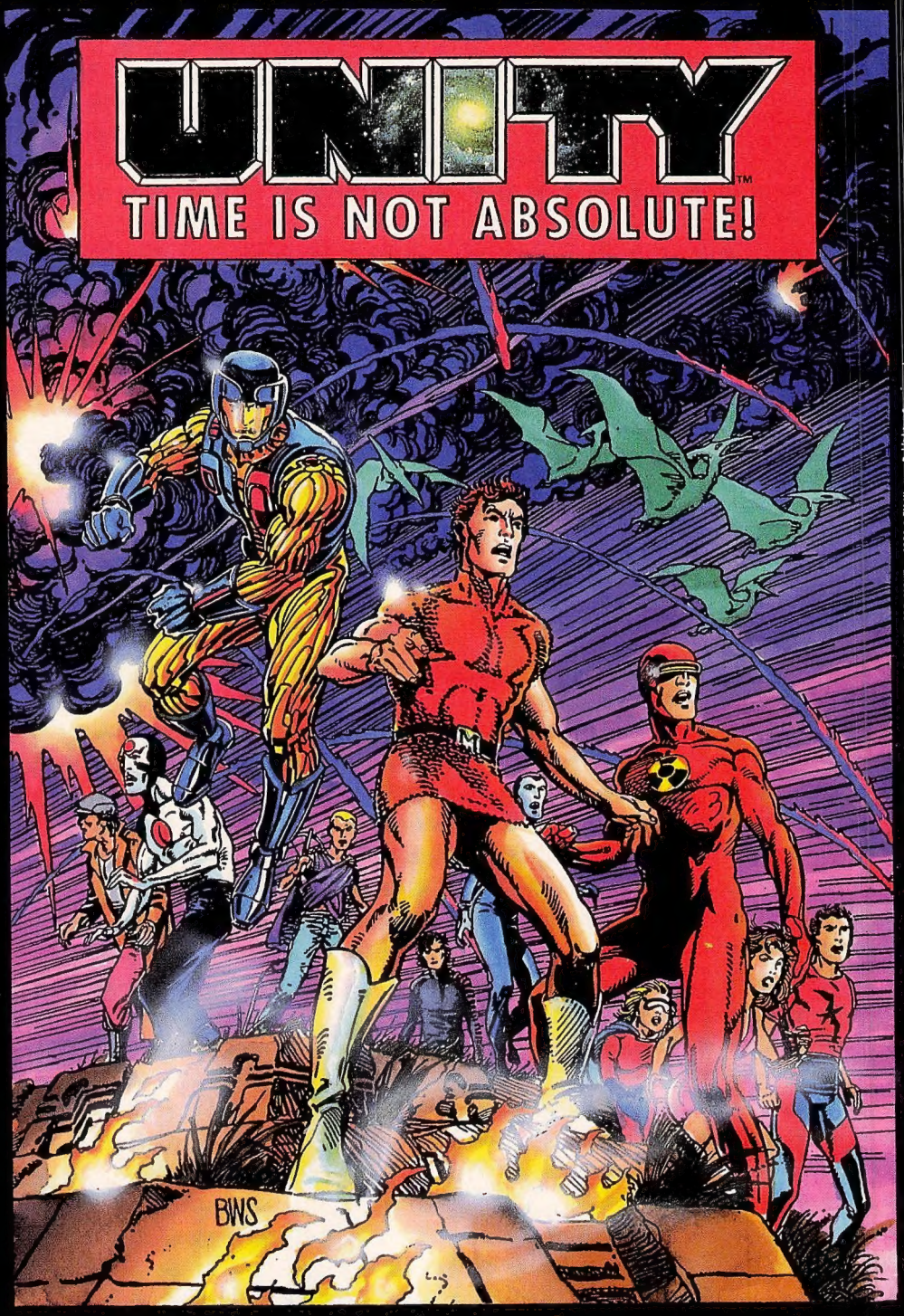

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COMING IN APRIL

Image Comics

Independent Artists Seek A New, Collective Destiny...

Top row, left to right, Erik Larsen, Rob Leifeld, Tod McFarlane, Marc Silvestri; bottom row, left to right, Hank Kanalz, Jim Lee, Jim Valentino

By Alex Chun

On February 8th, some of Marvel Comics' top artists sat together in the living room of *Wolverine* artist Mark Silvestri's Malibu beach front home. The purposes of this pow wow, which also included Jim Lee (*X-MEN*), Rob Liefeld (*X-Force*), Todd McFarlane (formally of *Spider-Man*), Erik Larsen (*Spider-Man*) and Jim Valentino (*Guardians Of The Galaxy*) was to introduce their new creator-owned company, Image Comics.

Image Comics will also be an imprint of the Malibu Graphics Publishing Group, with representatives from Malibu also in attendance.

What makes Image significant is that all the characters will be owned by their respective creators, and all this hot talent will be leaving one of the "Big Two". Also worthy of note is the fact that these creative people, as well others not in attendance, are leaving titles at the pinnacle of popularity for a project not without risk.

Among the titles that will comprise the Image Universe are the *Spawn* by McFarlane, *Youngblood* by Liefeld, *Wildcats* by Lee, The *Pact* and *Klone* by Valentino, *Cyberforce* by Silvestri and *The Dragon* by Larsen.

And so after a lot of banter, and some mocking of a Silvestri

Wolverine page still on the drawing board, the artists sat down for a roundtable discussion about their new books, their reasons for forming Image Comics, and their plans for the future.

WIZARD: Other than the people seated here, who else is going to be involved with Image?

Lee: Whilce Portacio, who is currently the artist on the *UNCANNY X-MEN*, is going to be doing a project with Chris Claremont for later this year. Chris called me up from Paris, France, and said they're still working out the details.

Valentino: I have a friend, who was at that convention in France, and he said Chris couldn't stop talking about the project and was giddy about it.

Lee: We're delighted to have a real writer join the crew. George Perez will also be doing pinups, and he'll probably be inking some work. He's booked up through the spring of '93, but after that he's entertaining the notion of breaking out with an all new George Perez superhero team [for Image]. I got confirmation on that today.

WIZARD: Will Scott Williams be doing any work for Image?

Lee: Yeah, he'll be the inker on some of the books.

Valentino: We also have a really big surprise if we can swing a deal. We've been talking with someone who will shock everybody.

WIZARD: Other than Claremont, who else will be writing?

Liefeld: It's quite possible that anonymous letter man is in this room [laughing].

(This was in reference to a controversy over a letter sent to the *Comic Buyer's Guide* by an anonymous artist, which simply stated said that it's much easier to be a writer than an artist and that readers buy the books not so much for the writing but the artwork.)

Lee: Todd will be writing his own work. Rob will be working with a new guy named Hank Kanalz. I'm going to be working with a friend of mine who has been helping me out with some stories. His name is Brandon Choi. He works with me on the *X-MEN* stuff, and I've known him since the fourth grade.

Silvestri: I'll be writing a book called *Cyberforce*. I am the old man of the group, so I will be using a cane to help me draw my book [laughing].

Valentino: I'm going to be writing my own stuff.

WIZARD: First of all, let's get down to what the creative teams will be on each book.

Larsen: *The Dragon* will be by Erik Larsen, who will be writing it, and I'm thinking about getting Erik Larsen to pencil it, and I'm pretty sure I can get Erik Larsen to ink it. Chris Elipolous is going to letter the book. I have no idea who is going to color it at this point. *The Dragon* is about big guys who kick the shit out of each other. It's super hero stuff. Where are we going to set all this stuff? [asking the rest of the group] Mine's in Chicago.

McFarlane: *Spawn* will be written, inked and penciled by me. Lettering will be by Tom Orzechowski of *X-MEN*. Dale Keown will do a pin-up in issue #1, and it'll be a character of his own creation, which he'll own the copyrights to. Hopefully we'll have Dale on board down the line and maybe expanding on his character. I'll also have George Perez do a one page pin-up of Spawn, and he'll be penciling and inking it himself. And in the center of the book we will be giving away a free poster that I'll be doing the black and white to and Ken Steacy will be doing the airbrushing for. It'll be a pull out.

WIZARD: Tell us a little bit about the Spawn.

McFarlane: I'd rather not go into all that much detail, but what I can say right now is that he was originally killed in 1987, and he's been shot back to what he thinks is the day after he was killed. But by cruel fate, he's back five years later, and where he was originally a black man, when he comes back he's a white man. The big thing about the Spawn is that he is a combination of the guy with no superhero powers, like Batman, all the way to guys like Superman. He's going to play it as straight as he can as a human being, but he has the power literally to move a planet. He won't do that, however, because every time he uses any kind of power it brings him closer to death. He's the kind of superhero who can and will die someday. He's got a finite amount of power and that's it.

Liefeld: The book I'm doing is Youngblood, and it comes out in March. It's a government strike force made up of super-operatives, extra-human people who have been genetically enhanced and scientifically enhanced. It's got a lot of government corruption and genetic corruption—it's like super steroids. In their environment, Youngblood are the super celebrities.

Lee: My book had to be tailored to the things Rob is establishing. It does make things a little difficult.

Liefeld: The thing with Youngblood is that they don't just go to a super heroes' headquarters, get an assignment and go out. The government assigns them to terrorists, drugs, stuff like that, but they have P.R. people for when it's all done. They have a guy who spreads their speech for them. They have costume designers. They think about their public image. One of the guys in Youngblood is a paroled criminal who they have just said hey, "You've got some extra abilities, and we want to insert you into the team." But he's still committing heinous crimes, and they [the P.R. people] cover them up, and you get to see how the P.R. people go to work and everyone comes out smelling like a rose—Just like our government. It's like real life except with super people; that's how I see it. [Within the Image Universe] this celebrity status can be limited to just the Youngblood team. They're just extremely popular with the media. With Ronald Reagan, who Jim always refers to as the Teflon President, things just bounce right off him, so Youngblood is like the Teflon super team in the media eye.

Silvestri: So do egos come into play?

Liefeld: Oh, sure. Some people don't care. Shaft is a weapons guy and an

ex-FBI agent who they yanked out of the FBI and inserted into the program immediately. He doesn't have any superpowers, but he's just good with weapons and very athletic and agile. He's in training and you're going to see that this is first time he's on the job. He's going to be leading people who are used to being lead by a guy named Battlestone, which spins off into another book called *Brigade*, but that's another story.

Jim L: I'm doing a book called Wildcats and basically since Rob was starting this Youngblood thing, to do something different, I'm going to say they are covert—purely covert—even though part of Youngblood is. What if a company existed that was a multi-national conglomerate with billions of dollars? They're not going to stop at bribing politicians to exert world influence. So what if they hired superpowered people to act as their agents abroad, and what if you had a cabal, a number of corporations around the world, who were each doing this and then setting their teams against each other to further their companies' ultimate agenda.

Silvestri: What's the name of this company Jim?

Lee: I haven't figured out the name of this company, maybe Image? The leader of this company is Emp. He's this real diminutive, cocky leader who's not the greatest role model for the Wildcats. To say anymore, I would be ruining future issues. It goes a lot deeper than that, and there is an ultimate plan being enacted here, not just mindless scuffles over turf and over resources. I see each book as a chapter in a novel but being able to stand on its own.

WIZARD: Tell us about the specific characters.

Lee: We have Emp, who is the leader. He sort of has this cosmic being who is his counselor, and her name is Void. The covert action team is called Strafe, which is made up of Spartan, Morph, Zealot, the Grifter and a guy named Hadrian—he's going to have a code name soon since everyone hates his name. They are all endowed with different powers, and they are going to be introduced in a three-part mini-series. I'll be coming back in January of '93 with a regular series, assuming the mini-series (which will be coming out in July, August and September) goes well. I'm going to be taking some time off since I have a baby coming in July. *Wildcats* will be the only book I'll be doing starting in January. I also have another character called Deathblow, and he's basically a man on a crusade against demons—we think they're demons—and he has a sword from the Crusades he uses to kill these demons. That's going to come out in a black and white anthology book. I'm going to do Deathblow, Rob is going to be doing a character called Bloodwolf and Sam Kieth is going to be doing his own character. It'll be out later this year. **(Incidentally, the new anthology has tentatively been titled *DARKER IMAGES*.)**

Silvestri: My book is called Cyberforce. It's a super team book of mutants (laughing). Basically what happens is that this corporation that deals in military technology rounds up various mutants and performs cybernetic surgery on them to enhance their natural abilities. They take their genetic powers, whether it's flying or superspeed, and enhance them mechanically. For example, one of the characters named Sasha Bullet has the ability to run faster and do things faster than anyone ever could.

Lee: I have a fast character.

Silvestri: No, this one is faster than yours. You can't even see mine. And basically this character is too fast for her physical abilities. If she ran into a fly going 2000 miles an hour on the ground, it would go right through her head. So what this company does is they enhance her with mechanics.

Valentino: Can't they just give her a helmet?

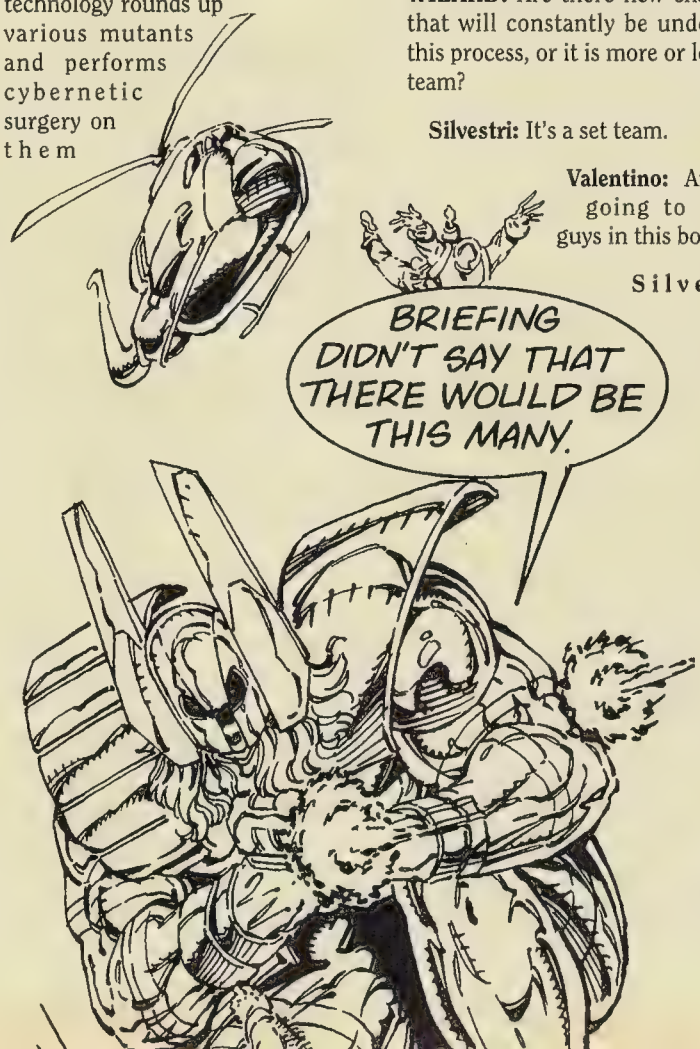
Silvestri: Damn, that's a better idea. They give her this helmet with a fly swatter visor. The basic gist is that this company improves on the original design with technology that enhances these mutants' latent abilities.

WIZARD: Are there new characters that will constantly be undergoing this process, or it is more or less a set team?

Silvestri: It's a set team.

Valentino: Are there going to be any guys in this book?

Silvestri:

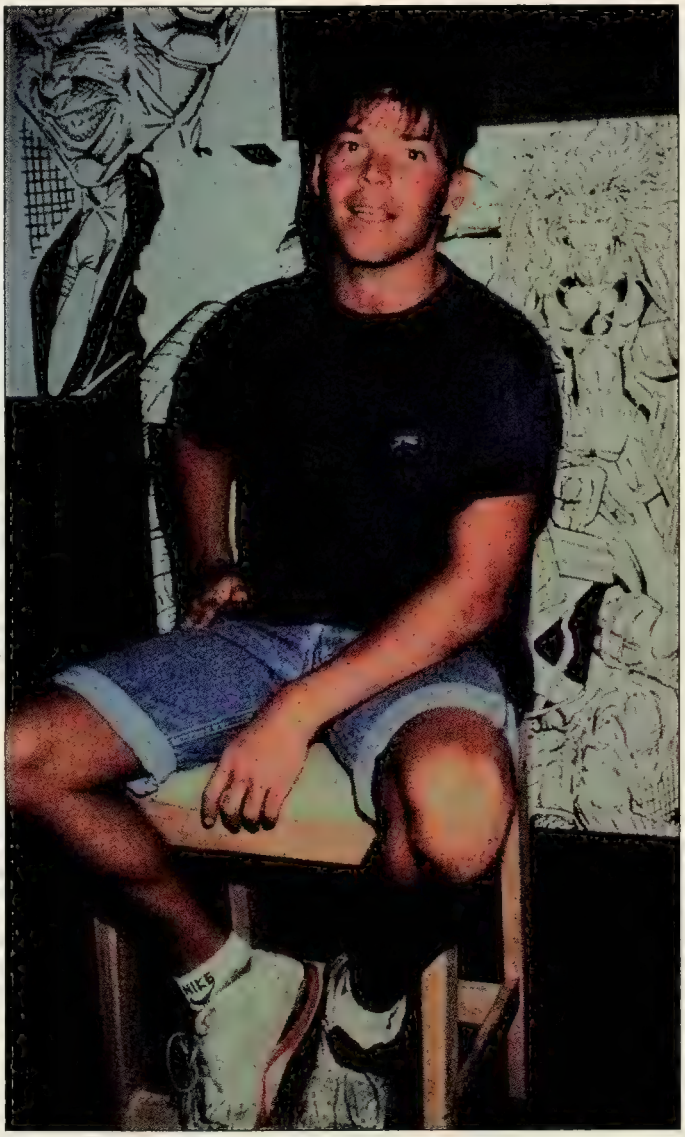


Yeah just one, but he's going to be in the background. This is going to be called Butt-shot comics [Laughing]. The team is split either four men and three women or three men and four women, and they're not celebrities. They're not going to be on the Arsenio Hall show or anything like that. That's the domain of another book, but I can't remember the name of it right now. Cyberforce starts as a mini-series through the summer and depending on how well it does, it will come back as a regular monthly book with twice the collectibility with a gatefold cover printed in five different versions, and die cut pages actually on the inside. I'll also be writing and drawing Cyberforce.

Valentino: I have two books. One of them is called The Pact. The Pact is a group of four characters who don't trust Young-blood, and they don't trust the government. They want to strike out on their own and follow their own rules. They're led by a young kid named Slam. He's a super speedster, but he's huge. He's the size of the Hulk. He can't run that fast, only like Mach 2, so he's the slowest super speedster. Then there's a chick called Cutlass. She uses swords and knives and that kind of thing, but she's blind. There's a kid called Firearm. He's our loose cannon. And then the final one is Blacklight. He's an older one. He was a hero in the 1960s. The other book is a new concept, and the reason I might not do The Pact is that there are so many other group books that we need some solo characters. The other idea I have is a character originally called I Mutant [now tentatively called Klone], and this character was basically created in a test tube. He may be an alien or he may be of another race, and the story revolves around that. It's a story basically about rage and about anger and about a character dealing with what he is, whatever the hell that is, which is completely different from everything else he sees. I will be writing and drawing the books, like everything else I've ever done my entire career. So blatt to all those people who say you can't write and draw at the same time. And my wife will be lettering and coloring it. The Pact takes place in LA. Back to Erik.

Silvestri: What does The Dragon do? Does he do any dragon stuff?

Larsen: No, he doesn't do any dragon stuff.



Lee: Flames and stuff?

Larsen: He very well might because I've been talking to these guys, and they think it would be a cool visual, even though I didn't know he should be doing such a thing.

Silvestri: All those who think he should breath fire, say "Aye".

Everyone: Aye.

Larsen: He'll be breathing fire in issue #1. The Dragon works for the Chicago police department. He's a one man S.W.A.T team. If some bad guy, like any of Mark's characters, are ripping up the place...

Silvestri: . . . Or you mean badly drawn guy. What does he eat?

Larsen: He eats coal (laughing). He's just a regular guy—with green skin. Okay he's a regular guy who's 5 foot 10, weighs 450 pounds, breaths fire and has green skin—perfectly regular.

Silvestri: What's that thing on his head?

Larsen: I have no idea.

WIZARD: Does he have any special powers?

Larsen: He's strong as all hell.

Silvestri: Does he fly?

Larsen: He does not fly.

Lee: Is he magic, does he have a "whore" of gold he protects?

Larsen: A what of gold? No but he'd like to.

Silvestri: No, he said hoard, not whore (more laughter). Relax guys you're stressing out the dog [Mark's Keeshond].

McFarlane: The one thing that bugged me is that Superman can play ping-pong with planets, and he can use his power at any time. This guy doesn't. He has a finite amount,

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so he can either use it in one day or he can stretch it out for 40 years.

Larsen: Is there like a little meter somewhere so he can read it?

McFarlane: He doesn't know. It bugs me that super heroes use their powers on a lark all the time

Silvestri: Like all the rest of our books, right?

McFarlane: But he has to be more responsible in using his power than that. It's like spending money. You've only got a hundred bucks, and it has to last you for the rest of your life. He's going to try and get though using pennies at a time. To give you an example, if he gets in a bar room brawl and 40 guys come after him, he knows he can get the shit get kicked out of him. He could let the shit get kicked out of him—and he might do that because a beating isn't any big deal because he doesn't want to use that power. Every time he uses that power he comes closer to death, and he's got to make a decision: "Is it worth it for me to win this time to use my powers?" Another option is he's got 40 guys around him, one guy steps forward and he french fries the guy to powder. Then he crosses his fingers because the energy it takes to french fry the guy is the equivalent of wiping out eight of these guys. It's a bluff at this point that the other 39 guys will go gulp and step back. If they do step forward he wouldn't use any more power at that point and would take the shit kicking. It's going to confuse the kids why sometimes he hails a taxi to get across the street and other times he can fly through steel. It depends how far he is pushed. There will be a symbolic meter in all the books to show the kids how much he uses and how much is still left.

WIZARD: What's his regular identity?

Larsen: Is he a cab driver?

McFarlane: I base a lot of stuff on my life. If I was to get killed today, I would want to come back for one reason: I love my wife. I don't want to come back to exact vengeance on people. So this would be the first character in recent memory that comes back for love not for hate. He wants to come back to see his wife, but unfortunately, in the deal he gets screwed because he's not dealing with someone upstairs. He's dealing with someone downstairs. He makes a deal with the Devil that says, "Okay, I'll send you back. You've got a finite amount of power and once it's done, you're mine. You were going upstairs, but the deal now is I get you, but you get to see your wife during the time it takes you to use your power." But he thinks he's going back the day after he died, and he comes back five years later. It's now five years later, and he's a white man when he was a black man. His wife is remarried, got kids and stuff like that. The reason he came back is now taken away from him. Hopefully we can pull it off and make him a tragic character. I'm trying to tie it in to one of these Youngblood guys, since he was a government worker, but he just got pissed off at the system. When he comes back now, he comes back with a new identity, and he can now do some of the things he thinks are right.

(After Todd's cohorts were able to wrestle the tape recorder away from him, we all took a break to munch on some chips and veggies, and drink down sodas. After that, it was back to business and some serious discussion about the philosophy behind Image Comics. And on a separate note, all the Image books will begin as a three-issue mini-series and then go monthly, with the exception of Spawn which will start as a monthly title in May.)

Lee: The rationale behind all of it [the release schedule] is to come out with products slowly over the course of the year, with high quality, to ensure that we have enough exposure in the marketplace and so we don't crowd each other out.

Silvestri: All the people buying this book can rest assured that this isn't just some operation where we'll do two books and then you won't see another book for the next few months. We're going to be dependable. We're going to be putting these books out every month.

McFarlane: We're monthly people.

Valentino: Here's something that I have heard. A lot people have expressed concern that we can't produce a monthly book.

Lee: I've been doing it for five years.

Valentino: So we will be coming out with monthly books when they do start coming out. It'll be steady, it will be a regular schedule. People will be able to get their Todd McFarlane fix and their Jim Lee fix.

McFarlane: Everybody here has six to ten characters as back ups, and I could give you a list of ten characters. If Spawn doesn't work, then I would be foolish to continue it. So what some of the guys are doing is that they put out a *Wildcats* for three issues, and if it doesn't quite go, there are another ten characters he can draw from. So why not try another one, and then when one hits, then maybe come out with the monthly of that one. I don't think it's a sin to try out some marketing stuff. To put out a monthly you're sticking your neck out a little bit more. I think sometimes it's good to put out characters and if the kids don't like it, we'll come up with something else they like.

WIZARD: Will you be doing work for anyone else?

McFarlane: I'll go on the record and say I'm done with Marvel and DC.

WIZARD: You mean forever.

McFarlane: No! Never say that word. I can only turn out one book. My attitude has always been, I'm not going to give pin-ups and covers [to other companies]. When I was working for Marvel, I never gave any pin-ups or covers to DC. It was just a personal loyalty that I gave. I did a couple of extra pinups and covers and posters for Marvel because I was working for them. So since I'm pulling my work there, if I have time to do an extra pinup or poster, it will be an Image pinup or poster.

Silvestri: In the back of Cyberforce maybe?

McFarlane: Whatever I can do. We're looking to do cross-overs too. Let it be known we're looking to do cross-

overs with *Darkhorse*. We also hope to do crossovers with Mirage.

Larsen: I don't know if it's been said, but all these books will be existing in the same universe, so they'll be crossing over with villains, each other, and everything else.

McFarlane: If Wildcats is a big thing or Cyberforce is a big thing, there might be an ALIEN-Cyberforce book. To me, that's good for the comic book community as a whole. Right now we don't want to be enemies with anybody. We want to play all together, and we're not looking to put anybody out of business. Ideally, it would be nice if Cyberforce could cross over with the X-MEN, if Youngblood could cross-over with X-FORCE. Will any of this come to pass? Who knows? I don't see why there's not more of that to tell the truth. The other thing, from a strictly moral standpoint, is for 50 years they [the big comic book companies] have treated [creative] people a certain way and my biggest reason for leaving is to try and change the system somewhat. And the way to change the system is to show that the creative people can survive without the big corporations because they've told us we can't really survive without them. But if we can, then I think somewhere down the line some things are going to have to change in this business that are going to be for the betterment of the creative people.

WIZARD: How did Image initially get going? Did you give a call out to everybody in the industry asked for people to sign up?

Liefeld: We talked to our friends. We've all become friends.

Lee: I'd take bullets for the guy.

Liefeld: Jim, Mark and Whilce, we all work in the same office and we see each other at conventions. We're all kind of a certain class. We all got in it at a certain time, and in a certain blanket of years.

Lee: The class of '86.

Liefeld: It's time to graduate and move on and we talked to people who we though would be interested.

McFarlane: One of the things too, besides that we're all friends, is that

to get a good deal for us creatively and to make any kind of impact to Marvel, DC or anyone else out there, we have to bring in commercial guys. We're not going to sit here and argue that we're the best—quantity and quality don't have to co-exist—what I'm saying is that commercially we make a difference right now, and so I felt it was time for the commercial guys to take a stance against something because other guys can't take a stance because they get hurt. And so if we're going to send out a message, it's time for some of the guys who are commercial at the top right now to say "Hell no we won't go, some of these things aren't right." So hopefully that will encourage some of the guys who don't have the strength behind us. We're trying to build solidarity amongst us. So if they go "Wow! Todd is willing to walk away from a big selling book and Jim is willing to walk away from a big selling book, and Erik and Mark and Whilce, we can walk, maybe, away from a book." It's a two fold thing. Besides just being friends, it just works out perfectly that we can also send a message that we can survive quite nicely and get a lot of offers. A lot of people have been phoning us for a lot of things like cards and T-shirts. We're working on toy deals. We're working on a variety of things.

WIZARD: Are the rest of you going to be doing work for Marvel at all?

Liefeld: I've been trying to do X-FORCE and Youngblood for the last two months. I thought I could do it. I'd say by the summer time, at the latest, I'm going to commit myself to just doing Image work for at least the next two years. Part of this has an experimental angle to it. We all might fall flat on our face, and I mean we're prepared to, but I think you have to be willing to risk it. I'm never going to say never either. That's foolish. This is not against Marvel. It's just the climate is right for this to happen right now.

Lee: We have to take our shot now, as opposed to 15 years from now when we're bitter old men. You have to do it in your prime.

McFarlane: Jack Kirby and Neal Adams quit. Gil Kane, Frank Miller, a lot of guys have quit over the years, and a lot of guys quit after their run. It's time for the guys to quit at their height and to send a message to the

companies.

Liefeld: This is first that's ever been done, I think.

McFarlane: A mass exodus at the height of your career, joining together for the first time.

Liefeld: Not as a blow to Marvel, but as an opportunity for ourselves.

Lee: A lot of people ask me why don't you just stay on the X-MEN for a year or two and milk it. You're still climbing, you're still very popular," they say. This is important enough to say I've got to take my chance now. This is the best time for me to do it. For me personally, I didn't leave because I had problems with Marvel. If anything, my relationship with Marvel is fine. It's always been great during the five years I've been working in comics.

McFarlane: For everybody.

Lee: The thing is, the opportunity to create and draw and write or tell stories with characters you own outright appeals to me because it brings me back to a time when I was kid in grade school and high school when I drew my own characters. If I drew the Avengers, it was because my team was pummeling them. And I never had that feeling when I was creating stuff for Marvel because it always had to fit in the Marvel Universe. They have certain rules about what can be done and what can't be done. Once you're created a character another guy can use in his book and do things with it. Creating stuff for the Image line has brought me back to the time when I was kid. When I would create on the fly. That's cool. Here's the villain and this is their hideout and this is their code word. Whatever I want.

Larsen: So I guess now you're going to be pummeling Rob's characters.

Lee: For me, I wish I could do both the X-MEN and Wildcats in that I feel a certain loyalty to the fans who have supported me in my career and who have supported the X-MEN. But the simple fact is, like Todd, I would rather do one good book then try to hack out two books and get them out on time. So what it comes down to is if Wildcats works out well, that's the book I'll be doing.

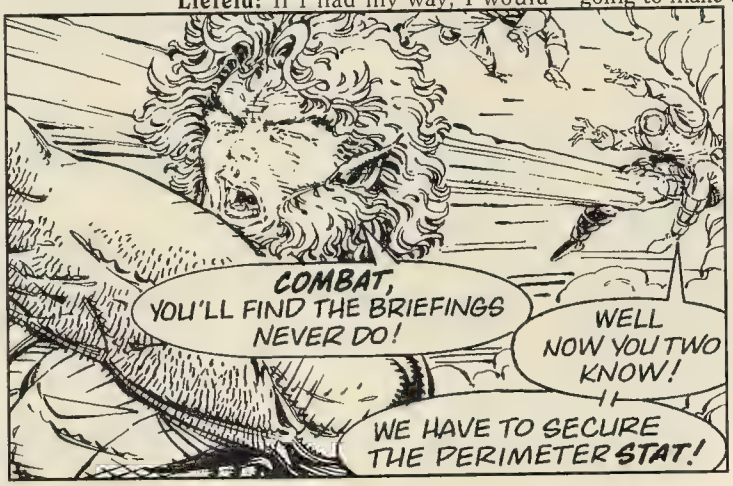
McFarlane: I don't think Jim or anyone here is cheating the public. They're getting one good book right now out of Jim, and Jim is going to come back with another good book. It's just not going to have the same logo on it, I'm sorry to say. You can't let the readers dictate everything to you, you have to do what best for you. If I stay on *Spider-Man* for the next 20 years, the energy wouldn't still be there. I could still do it, on a lark I could do it, but it wouldn't be my best stuff.

Silvestri: I think that the kids who buy these books will be seeing the best work we've ever done, simply because of the fact that all of our projects are coming straight from our heart and they are close to us. We get complete creative control, and that's very important to the creator. And that importance to the creator is going to spill off into the book and in turn, spill off to the reader. I think they are going to be very happy customers.

Larsen: [Laughing] Not only that, but we're going to be drawing characters we know how to draw. And we can draw whatever we want. And I'm going to be gearing my guy to my strengths and what I do well. And I assume you'll be doing this at well.

Liefeld: If I had my way, I would attempt to do both X-FORCE and Youngblood and keep them both going. But anything I create for Marvel—they'll give me some credit and everything—but ultimately it's just not mine. It's not that I don't approach it enthusiastically, I have always approached everything enthusiastically, but now we get to create these guys and own them ourselves. And you know what? That makes a lot of difference, not so much in the money you could make from the character or stuff like that, but you can go "Youngblood is mine."

McFarlane: There's no vindication on my part. The companies have now become character driven, and everyone in this room would agree with that. The characters are far more important than the creators, and unfortunately they [comic book companies] have stopped acknowledging that human beings created those characters. What we're doing now at Marvel and DC is creating characters that they're going to use against fellow creators. This is where my moral stance is. Even though I was somewhat successful, I never created anything new because I would not allow any company, I don't care what company, to use my creations against a kid, who is three years old today, 20 years down the line. When I was raised, my dad said that "If you get an apple unexpectedly and it turns gold after the guy gives it to you, you make sure he gets a piece back because you didn't know when you took it it was going to turn to gold." The comic book companies took those characters not knowing they were going to make them tens of millions. And now that they know they make tens of millions, they're not willing to acknowledge the guys who created them. So what we've got to do is seize the moment. If I was to do this three or four years ago, I would bring 20 thousand people and that's tough to get people excited about it. If I can bring potentially



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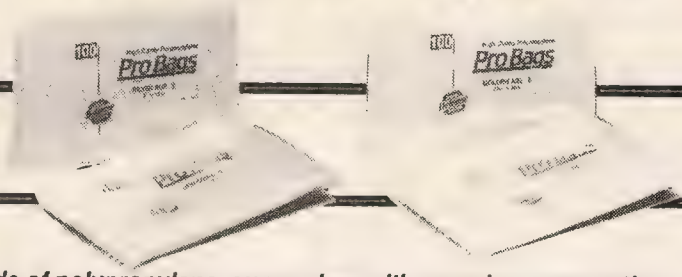

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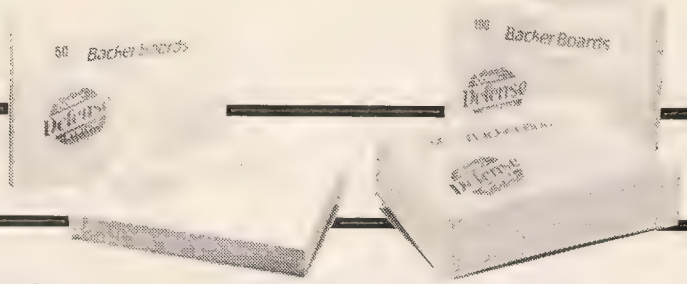

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half a million now, the chances are 50 times higher that a reader will stick around.

Liefeld: Talking about the climate right now, I don't believe that Youngblood could've existed at Marvel. The thing about Marvel, and DC somewhat, is you create a guy with a shield, they've already got a guy with a shield. You want to create a guy who runs fast, they've already got a guy who runs fast. We've all been talking for months now. I create something new and I fax it to Jim and Erik, or Erik faxes me. This is a fun climate. Mark, I've never seen him so excited. It's like,"Yeah, I draw Wolverine" versus "YEAH! I draw Cyberforce!" It's just exciting.

WIZARD: So what makes your team books better than say one of Marvel's team books?

Liefeld: We're working for us now, not Marvel or some other company.

Lee: We're not flooding the market with 50 new books and we're not using any guy we can find on the street to draw stuff.

Valentino: You're not getting a book that is being watered down by a bad inker, or a bad colorist or a bad editor.

Silvestri: It's no longer Marvel Comics' *Spider-Man*, it's Rob Liefeld's Youngblood. It's Jim Lee's Wildcats. It's Todd McFarlane's Spawn. It's no longer the big companies'' property. It's individual's property.

McFarlane: The pressure is now on Mark Silvestri to sell his book. So now if his book doesn't sell, he can't say, "I got a bad inker or I got a bad editor." He's got to look himself in the mirror and say, "You screwed up or you didn't get the right people or you're not doing the right character."

Lee: Getting back to your question about what makes this product different from anything else, I would hope that the quality would be better. But not only that, it's a virgin universe. It's not something that you have to read years and years of to understand. There should be a sense that you're jumping in at the very beginning, the ground floor. And because we're not going to be just inundating the market with more and more books, it's the kind of development that will be done carefully and slowly with all the creators approval. I can't just do things with Spawn without Todd okaying it. And hopefully with that, we'll be able to keep the characters in line with the creator's own personal vision of what that character is like. And hopefully that will carry through the universe, and as it continues to grow, it won't get diluted.

Liefeld: I didn't create the new ghost rider for Marvel, but the minute that book hit he was in 20 books, and I don't think the writer of that book had anything to say about that. That's not going to happen here and nobody would wants that to happen. I'm not going to yank Spawn and not ask Todd for his approval.

McFarlane: I have two choices. If I don't want to get weighted down by continuity, then I just stay away from everybody's stuff. Then I just draw my stuff. Some guys are really tight into continuity, and that's good

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because then we can do crossovers. Again, we can make all the decisions, good bad or indifferent. None of us will be forced to work on cross-overs or projects where we don't want to use our characters, unlike some companies where it's done to generate higher sales.

Silvestri: We'll do it because we feel like it and consequently we'll make a better product.

WIZARD: It's two years from now, what do you see?

Silvestri: Damn, I can't believe it didn't work, I was so sure.

Liefeld: Have you seen the new Youngblood film?

Valentino: I would like to see a whole bunch of creators standing shoulder to shoulder.

Larsen: This room would be filled with press people.

McFarlane: The goal I see, besides standing shoulder to shoulder, is to go beyond the direct sales market. If I just want to do direct sales comic books, I'll make a living for the rest of my life. X-MEN comic books sold how many zillion comics, but I say X-MEN to my mom, she doesn't even react to that. She's heard of the Hulk because it was on TV. So what I would like to see the company do is expand to the mass market. That means doing licensing deals or getting into places that doesn't usually have comic books. If I wanted to do something aimed at military people, it's tough to me to go to Marvel and say put an ad in a military paper or put an ad at the military bases, because that becomes a separate entity that they have to deal with. But if one guy [with Image] wants to do that, he knows military stuff and he wants to sell it specifically to the military, boom there are ways to go about that. I just think that there are too many open doors right now that nobody has tried to walk through and if we can uncrack a few of those in a few years.

WIZARD: You all seem extremely passionate about your individual projects, do you worry about a quick burnout?

Liefeld: If we do, we'll go do something else that we enjoy.

Lee: Not really. I've been working on a monthly book for five years now. Now that you mention it I'm pretty tired (laughter).

McFarlane: There's a degree of burnout to anybody, but I think the burnout factor will be a lot slower, because working for a company you get nipped at the heels. The way I always say it is you do the 100-year dash and you're giving me army boots to run it in. I'm still trying as hard as I can, but I'm not getting there as quite fast as I could if you gave me sneakers. As long as I don't have to answer to anybody, that may sound egotistical, I don't get into any fights. I got into a lot of fights when I was only a penciler, with writers and inkers, but I take over all those things and whether it was any better, I was mentally happier. It was like wow, I like comic books again now. The burnout factor gets slower and slower when you are in charge of your own creation.

WIZARD: On the other side of coin, will it be more difficult not having an editor pounding on your door making sure you get your pages in on time.

Liefeld: It's all incentive. We're all responsible since this is our own book. It would just be bad for each individual to slack off and miss a few months. It always hurts sales when you miss an issue or you're late or something. So now we're responsible for our own profits.

McFarlane: Since we only have a finite amount of time, we have to go out and give some of the responsibility away. We have three people from Malibu Comics on board to help us take this thing into the '90s. The one thing I would like to make clear is that this is a creator owned company and that Malibu is helping us with their expertise to get us past those humps and hurdles.

(With that, Todd and the rest of Image crew left to ogle some of the artwork that some of the artists had brought, and we the press continued our discussion with the people from Malibu Graphics who would be handling the business and editorial side of Image: Publisher Dave Olbrich, Editor in Chief Chris Ulm and Creative Director Tom Mason.)

Olbrich: I'm going to be their direct contact with the company. I will be the guy that they call if they need something or want something. Tom and Chris will also be there and they will know how to handle deadlines or whatever.

WIZARD: Like special printing tricks and stuff?

Olbrich: Right. If they want a glow in the dark cover, I come back to them and tell them what it's going to cost.

Ulm: All the advertising and the promotions will go through us.

Olbrich: I'll be working with all the distributors in terms of all the special promotions and premiums and all the advertising and stuff that's going to be done for the line.

WIZARD: How did you guys connect?

Olbrich: Malibu originally talked to Rob about publishing Youngblood in 1987—before he did *Hawk* and *Dove* for DC—so we've always been in touch with Rob. He did covers for us, we're in the same area and we run into each other at shows. So we just started talking about what could happen next, and it turned out that we started talking to them at the same time they were talking amongst themselves.

Ulm: Also, we're always had a creator owned component of the company. In other words, it's not a big stretch for us to go, "Okay you want to do a whole line of books where you own everything yourselves," because we've already been doing that for the last 5 years.

WIZARD: You're going to be working on all the scheduling.

Olbrich: Well I'll be working on it with them. The important thing is to set up a sane schedule so that we're not scheduling stuff that isn't going to happen. So scheduling isn't so much me as, "When can you get your book done." And then once we get that done, we'll talk about whether we want to move it back or move it

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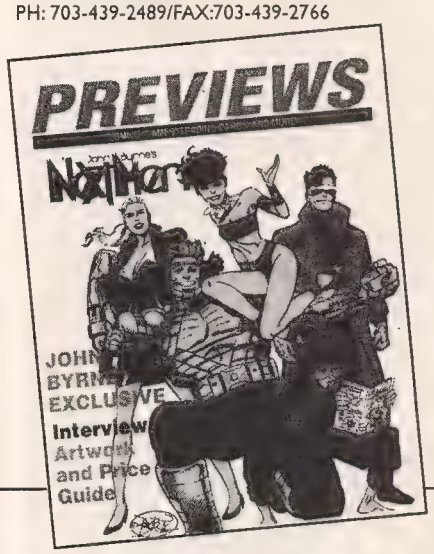

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forward depending on other considerations. More important than anything, these guys have to have the time to do their jobs right.

McFarlane: (Who just returned from another room to join the conversation) This first year there's going to be a lot of conventions, and there will be Malibu tours that go on the road. And because we have to sign the books and stuff, we can't do the PR work. So Malibu's going to be handling a lot of this.

WIZARD: How closely will the Image name and Malibu name be tied to one another?

Olbrich: Image and Malibu will be side by side. That's the plan. We work side by side, and that's how stuff will appear.

McFarlane: In the latest ad that they put out, which I thought was right on, the main component is the characters. I'm not all that concerned that the Todd McFarlane name is even on the stuff. I'm more concerned about pushing the line, the image, the logo, and the imprint. The imprint at this point is Image because we want kids to say Image, Image, Image, Image comic books. The latest ad says, for example, "The Spawn is coming out from Image Comic Books in cooperation with Malibu Graphics," and that's about the best way you can work it. We're saying we'll give you our expertise, which is we'll get the books and add the talent. You guys give us a lot of the business and editorial. What we want is a new line out there.

Olbrich: There isn't a lot of confusion about what Epic is to Marvel, so I can't imagine this being confusing either.

WIZARD: What's the difference between Image and say Epic.

Olbrich: The Epic relationship with Marvel is completely different from the Malibu relationship with Image.

Ulm: The name Epic is owned by Marvel. Image is owned by the cooperative artists you see in front of you.

Olbrich: It's their deal. It's their characters. It's their books. It's their editorial policies. It's their projects. What we do is cooperate to see that they don't have problems printing and shipping and we take care of promotions and invoicing.

Lee: (Who has just returned to admire Mark's beach front view) Epic is one of the ones we considered. We talked to Comico, Tundra, all these guys, almost every publisher out there. We chose Malibu because they have an aggressive sales force—they want this almost as much as we do.

WIZARD: What kind of priority will you be giving the Image line?

Ulm: It's a top priority. If you look at the promotion that was done for Youngblood I think you will see why. And that's what you can expect for all the Image books, the same promotional activity.

Olbrich: Youngblood would've gotten a lot of notice on its own, but I think the ad campaign and the promotion has really brought it attention. Nobody, I think at this point, in the direct sales market is not aware of what's going on with Youngblood, who's doing it and what the stuff looks like. I can guarantee you it will sell over 317,000 copies in the direct sales market, which makes it the best selling creator own comic book of all time, bar none.

WIZARD: Newsstand distribution?

Olbrich: That's one of the things we'll be looking into.

WIZARD: Since this was first conceived, and everybody has gotten wind of it, what kind of response have you received?

Mason: Every kind.

Olbrich: There are some people who say they can't believe what a terrific deal this is, then there are the guys in the corner going "grrr." Grousing about it. Chris points out the only grousing I've heard is from the creative community. I have heard an ounce of negativity from the retail or distribution end.

WIZARD: What is the creative community saying?

Olbrich: That they're pandering. If they're going to leave Marvel, why are they doing Marvel like books? It's not even worth discussing really.

Lee: I've only heard positive things, but then again I don't talk to any of my enemies.

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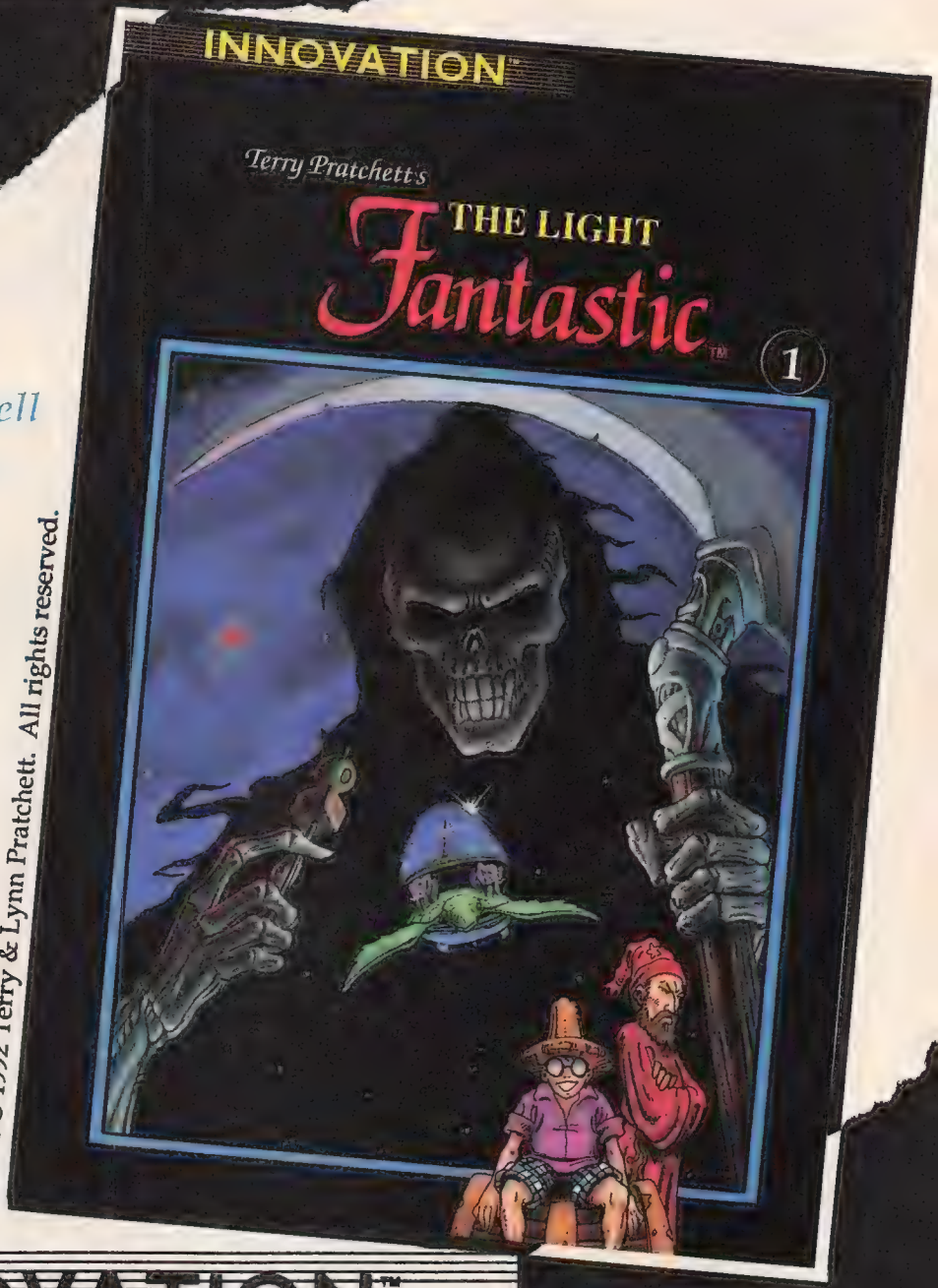

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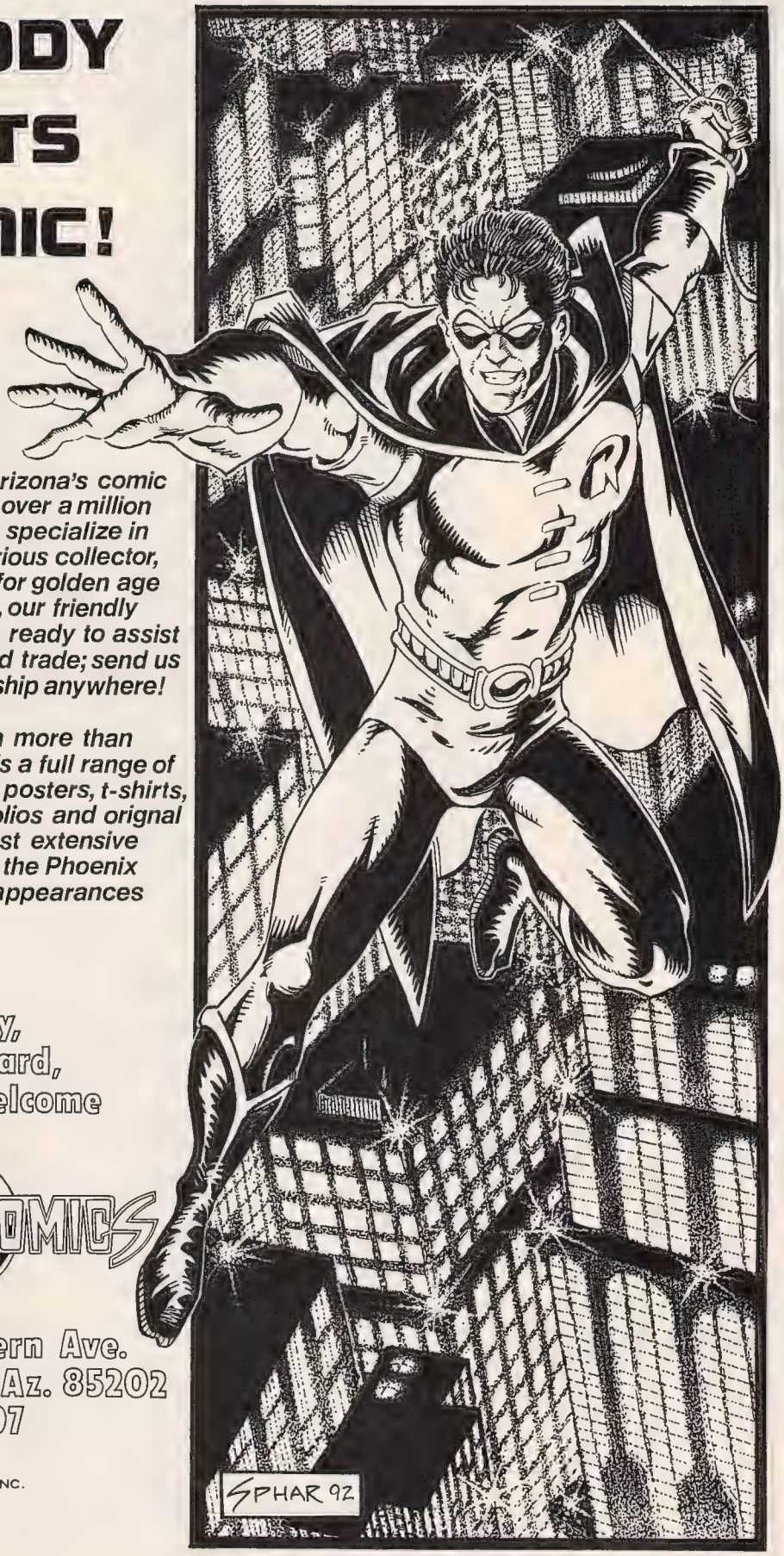

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VALIANT TURNS UP THE HEAT!

WIZARD Interviews Steve Massarsky, Seymour Miles and Jon Hartz from Voyager Communications, Inc.

WIZARD: When was Valiant "born", not the idea behind it, but the first time actual production started on a book?

MASSARSKY: Valiant opened our doors in October of 1989 and we started production on our first book. I believe it was April 1990. Our first superhero book was March 1991 with Magnus.

WIZARD: Where was the idea born?

MASSARSKY: Actually, it's a pretty odd story. I came out of the music business and had worked with Cabbage Patch on the Cabbage records, and believed that there was a market for a live family show, not a children's show, not a kiddie show, but a family show, and approached Cabbage Patch with it and then turned down the idea. I spent about a year or so looking for the right property to this show vision that I had and finally ran into some people from Marvel and approached Marvel about doing the show. Marvel agreed to do the show and it took a year to negotiate the license for the show. The day I got the license was the day that Jim Shooter left Marvel. When I asked Marvel who should write the show they suggested Jim Shooter come in and write it. We got together, spent about six months working on the script of the show, and found that we worked real well together and Jim said to me one night after dinner "Let's start our own comic book company." I said "okay" and we got started as partners in our own company at which point we set out to look for venture capital to back the company, took an odd turn in an attempt to buy Marvel, which didn't work - we actually finished second to Perelman in the bidding, and then when that was over we looked at each other and said "we're a good team so let's go out and get some of the venture people we talked to and start our own company.

WIZARD: The way your universe was formed was quite unusual. You didn't do the standard "bitten by radioactive" whatever or the "I am a mutant" story. Your characters are well thought out, and a lot more believable than most superheroes. How much thought goes into the creation of, say, a character like Shadowman?

HARTZ: A lot of the creative processes up here are almost done by group decisions. We all work in a large area, so we have about 15 to 20 different artists at any given time up here, plus we have Jim Shooter, Bob Layton and Don Perlin, as well as the marketing staff, Steve Massarsky and myself and Seymour Miles and Ray Weiss, everybody has a say-so. We talk over ideas because we all work in one big room. If there is a discussion going on about a particular character, everybody throws their 2 cents in, and it's really up to Jim and Bob to sort these ideas through and try to come up with some kind of a cohesive character.

MASSARSKY: On Shadowman, one of the interesting things is that Shadowman is a jazz musician set in New Orleans, and because of my background in the music business I have a lot of consulting involved with the character. In fact, we have Dicky Betts from the Allman Brothers making a cameo appearance in the first issue, and we will probably have several other musicians over other issues pop in and out of his life, but when we do music, our attitude is that since we know it from the inside out, we're going to do it right, we're going to do the whole background and scene the way it needs to be done.

WIZARD: Do you have a committee of readers that you pass by these ideas prior to you publishing.

HARTZ: Not necessarily, although most of the guys up here don't read comic books. I go to the stores every week and buy my batch of comic books. A lot of the creators, a lot of the pencilers, inkers and colorists that work here as well, they go out every week, buy a batch of comics, we bring them all in on Monday morning and we show what we think are the best ones to Shooter and to Bob and Steve, so in a sense we are readers. We are fans just as much as we are creators.

MASSARSKY: One of the interesting things with Jon on this is that at one point we said to him, "we'll give you a budget to go out and buy whatever comics you need for reference purposes and for your own reading," and he said, "no, I'd rather go into a store thinking like a purchaser and thinking like a consumer as opposed to thinking like a marketing person or sales person. I don't want to go in with a unlimited budget, I want to go in with my $20.00 in my pocket and buy what I think are the best comics out that week."

MILES: Something that's perhaps distinctive to add on to that, is that we're readers not collectors, so that when Jon or Steve are talking about going out and buying comic books that we think are the best and that we like to look at and read, we mean *read*. We don't mean, oh this is going to be valuable some day, this is what we enjoy, this is what we get off on, this is what is meaningful for us as a piece of, I don't mean this in any hyperbolic sense, literature, it's art. And we enjoy the read. I don't know if there is any one here who actually is an active collector, maybe there is, but most of us are active readers. So that's what we look for - a good story. That's what we all enjoy.

MASSARSKY: That's not to turn off the collectors.

MILES: No, it's not to turn off the collectors, but what we're seeking - what's getting our juices flowing — I mean Jon goes every week to comic book stores and he does collect them, I understand he has rooms full, but —

MASSARSKY: If we create great entertainment and it happens to be collectible too, then we really have accomplished our purpose.

WIZARD: When a character is being thought up, do you ever think "hey, we should do a Batman type guy", or do you just play around with a bunch of ideas?

HARTZ: We never go out consciously to try and repeat particular characters, but when you get right down to it, most comic characters are all derived from the old Greek myths, or the epic legends of our culture. The idea of a team book is really the Odyssey. It's Ulysses gathering up all the heroes for a quest type story line. You know Hercules is the basis for the popular super strong character. So I think a lot of times we do the same thing. We return back to the old epic legends or

the types of story telling that have been passed through our culture for years and years and years, and that's really more or less kind of what we look for in our characters rather than say - oh yeah, let's do a Batman kind of character or let's do a Superman kind of character, we go and take a look more at the old myths. For instance Eternal Warrior, the book we're coming out with in May - is a story of a 10,000 year old guy, whose basic credo is might for right, so he's always showing up at opportune times. He's the ultimate warrior, but he shows up and fights for right. In one instance he may fight during World War II, he fought against the Nazis, but yet in 1865 he fought against Custer on the Indian side, so that particular legend has been passed on for years. There have always been stories of Methuselah or even goes back to the bible or goes back to the heroic legends - immortal Gods - and all those things. So most of our ideas come from a deeper well than just other guys' characters.

WIZARD: Who's the favorite hero here in the bullpen?

HARTZ; Everybody has there own favorites. Personally I like Archer and Armstrong. They're my favorite. What about you guys?

MASSARSKY: I like Harbinger at the moment.

MILES: My feeling is also Harbinger and X-O. I think those are my two favorites.

MASSARSKY: But don't forget Solar. Solar is really good.

MILES: (Echoing Massarsky) Don't forget Solar. This month is superb, so it really is a tough call. It changes and everyone is going to feel different.

WIZARD: Are there any plans to do a cross company project, say with Dark Horse, Image Press or Marvel?

MASSARSKY: There is a plan for a Dark Horse crossover but the announcement has been made yet, and we will make that announcement together formally. There have been hints at it already, and people have been talking about it, and it actually has been mostly plotted already. It's scheduled for September, October, but that's all I can tell you at the moment. But we're both very excited about it, and with Image Press, we have had some preliminary discussions between myself and Jim Lee about doing something together, but no specifics have been done on that. Also something else which is unique that we're doing. We are doing an ad swap with Malibu and with Dark Horse, starting in March's Youngblood #1 book. Malibu will be carrying an ad for Valiant and Unity books and starting I think in March or April Dark Horse books will be carrying Valiant ads and we will start in March or April carrying ads for both Malibu and for Dark Horse.

WIZARD: Has anyone ever seen Steven Segal with Bob Layton, and is it possible that they're the same person?

MILES: They are in fact the same person. I think actually Bob has more hair when he's playing the role of Bob Layton, which is very important to him. But basically I do think they are in fact one and the same, and I have noticed at some parties where they both supposedly are to be at, you never see them in the same room. Not once. There is a lot of indication that they are in fact the same person.

WIZARD: We get an incredible amount of mail asking us if Bob Layton will ever do any Iron Man. Do you know if he will?

MASSARSKY: There's no likelihood at this point that Bob's going to do anything but Valiant. We have him working here from 9:00 in the morning till 11:00 - 12:00 at night. I think if you read X-O, that Bob works on and you read the books that Bob works on here, you'll find the same interest that you had in Iron Man, and I think that rather than wait for Bob to come back to Iron Man, I think they ought to come over

and read what he's doing now. They'll see that the stuff is better than where they were with Iron Man.

HARTZ: Bob is, and has been such an intrinsic part to the growth of the Valiant Universe. He's really almost a sounding board for ideas and is really in on the ground floor on absolutely every single book that we do. He not only art directs everything, but in conjunction with Jim, in most cases helps plot and co-create everything we have ever done and everything we probably ever will do. He's a very, very co-architect of the whole Valiant Universe.

MASSARSKY: Bob came with us very early in the process of building Valiant and he is, at this point, our Senior Vice-President of creative, and really as Jon said, the whole creative process revolves around Bob and Jim and Barry. There's no way we're going to let Bob go and do any Iron Man.

WIZARD: What can we expect from the Unity crossover series? Any major changes in the Valiant Universe?

HARTZ: Very major changes are going to happen with the Unity crossover. You have to remember that unlike Marvel Comics, or DC Comics, we haven't licensed our characters out for Underoos, or for bedsheets, or for different formats of licensing so, therefore, we are not restricted like Marvel. Marvel can't change Captain America's costume or make any sort of definitive change in his costume, because they've licensed it out and licensees will be upset about that, so that Marvel has to tread very carefully whenever they have any sort of crossover consequences. With us, we're not restricted by that. We can kill characters, we can mortally wound them, we can do whatever we want, because we're not bound by licensing agreements. And expect major, major changes that are going to happen with all of our Unity characters. We had a big creative meeting about a month ago and Jim Shooter sat down with all 15 - 20 artists, the sales staff, - one big giant meeting where we threw out ideas about what affect would Unity have on all the various characters. Some of the ideas were very, very far reaching. I don't want to go into too much detail, but a lot of what comes out of Unity is going to be a tightening up the Universe as it exists right now. We've already hinted at Magnus' true origins are going to be found. After all, Magnus was considered to be a foundling child, but in the year 4000 AD, when people are being grown out of test tubes and robots are being created and bio-genetic engineering is a commonplace thing, how could there be a foundling child in the year 4000. Well we're going to answer that question. We're also going to have major characters die. We're not restricted. I don't think anybody in the comic book industry has every killed off a major character, who is a star of his own book before, and we're seriously considering it. So there are a lot of options in things that we can do. Jim and Bob described Unity - they compare it to World War II. If you were going to do a comic series of World War II, what you would do is you would probably have one comic book about the Battle of the Bulge, one comic book about the Normandy Invasion, one comic book about the battle in the Phillipines, so forth and so on, and you could reach each of those individually and have a really great story, but when you read them all together you get this encompassing view of World War II. Well that's kind of what Unity is. Unity is going to deal with each of these characters and their experiences. They're in the middle of a war, and this war is going to have profound consequences on each individual character as to what they have to experience throughout Unity.

MASSARSKY: If you think that we've been doing by putting out the books we put as building the legs of the Valiant Universe and you've had each character - Harbinger, X-O, Magnus, Solar, as different legs to the universe, think of Unity as the platform for the universe now, and that platform will be used to take off in all different directions for Unity in the future. One of the things that I like, I don't know if it's giving away anything, but I'll tell you then we can decide whether you should print it later, Jim has put a thing into Unity where the Eternal Warrior runs into Arik X-O and the Eternal Warrior hates him, and Arik can't understand why this guy hates him and then what they realize is the Eternal Warrior and Arik met on the field of battle 2000 years ago. That Arik wounded the Eternal Warrior who, of course, survived the wound because he is the Eternal Warrior, and then after wounding the Eternal Warrior, Arik stole his woman, burned his hut, and then when the Eternal Warrior went after, Arik had already been kidnapped by the Aliens, so there was point in time when these guys had met before 2000 years. So this will be woven in and out of the Universe and in and out of Unity. So there will be a lot of surprises and interesting little twists to it. Japan will be radically affected by Unity. The map of the world will be radically affected by Unity. We have Frank Miller doing the covers for the first eight issues. We have Walt Simonson doing the cover for the next eight issues. We have Barry Windsor Smith doing Archer and Armstrong both months and doing Unity 0 which is a giveaway book. We have John Dixon, who did Airhawks in Australia, doing the Warrior; Ernie Cologne with this Magnus technique that you see will be doing Magnus all the months. Ernie Colon has developed a new technique for Magnus where they are basically full paintings, and everybody who has seen it has just gone wild over it. I think the retailers that we've been meeting with, and the fans we've been meeting with who have seen it, don't understand that this could be Ernie Colon. It's a technique that Ernie came in, said to Jim "look, I have something I want to try, it's never been done before and I want to take a shot at doing it, can I try it?" Jim said "sure", and the stuff is just beautiful. It may be something you want to use some stuff of. It starts in Magnus #13, which is March's Magnus. Faye Porovich who did the Vampire, Lestat series for Innovation is writing Shadowman now, David Lapham who has become a budding star of ours, is drawing both Shadowman and Harbinger during Unity. Of course, Bob Layton will be working all through Unity on various parts of it. We have Ralph Reese inking Barry in Archer and Armstrong, Stan Drake will be inking Solar for Don Perlan, Janet Jackson, of course, will be doing all the primary coloring stuff. Janet is starting to write as well as Bob.

HARTZ: Bob, Barry and Jim are all co-plotting all the stories and then individually taking books and scripting them as well. So it's a real collaborative effort with anywhere from 15 different creators that are all giving input into into the Story. David Michilinie will be doing some writing. Tom Rider will be doing some inking and anybody else who wants to jump on board while we're working on this. We're real excited about the work. Again with Unity we wanted to keep the regular talents that do the normal books from issue to issue. We didn't want to have Barry do all 18 or 19 issues, because that's not a fair assessment of what the Valiant Universe really is. We've worked real hard over the last year or so to develop a house style that with various input gets better and better with each issue, and that's what we want to keep continuing throughout

Unity as well, not just bring in a ringer and have somebody do a great book and after Unity is over have the book be something that it's not. So the same creators that work on the books on a normal basis will continue to their same work on the rest of the issues.

WIZARD: How is Unity #0 going to work?

HARTZ: Unity #0 is a free comic book in limited quantities. What we're doing is we're apportioning allotments to retailers. Actually the way it works, is that for every set of Unity books of all 8 issues that a retailer orders, he will receive 2 free copies of Unity #0. The idea, hopefully, is that he will be able to give a free Unity #0 to every Valiant fan he has currently as well as have some extra copies to give out to people who have never before read a Valiant comic, but I do urge all Valiant fans, and anybody who would be interested in obtaining the free copy of Unity #0 to reserve their copy with their local comic store as well as all 8 issues of Unity in May and all 8 issues in June. Traditionally we find that most Valiant comics sell out in the comic stores within a week or two after they have been published and our loyal Valiant fans, we don't want them to miss out, not only on just the free comic, but also the individual issues of the storyline as well. So we urge all of our Valiant fans and anybody who'd be interested in reading about Unity to place an order with their comic store before March 15. Let them know that they want copies.

WIZARD: What do you want the comic book world to know about you guys? Those who think of you as just another independent?

MASSARSKY: First of all, we're not another independent, and I kind of find the word "independent" to be almost grating. What makes us an independent, and Marvel - Marvel, or DC - DC. Coming out of the music business there are majors and independents, and what the majors have to set them apart from the independents is their own distribution and they're funded very well. Well neither Marvel or us, or anybody else in the industry has their own distribution. We're all distributed through independent distributors, so on that level there's nothing that makes us an independent, any more than Marvel is. On the other hand, we are well funded, so it's not like we're a small independent sitting here, hoping that maybe one of our books will catch on and maybe we'll be able to stay alive. We're alive and we're here and we're building a universe. I said at the IADD (International Association of Direct Distributors) meeting, in one part of my speech, that I left a very big music business law practice to take over part of this company, and the reason I did it is I felt we could build this company into a real contender, that with the marketing people we've surrounded ourselves with, and the sales people and the creative ability the company has, there's no reason that we shouldn't be challenging Marvel and DC within a short period of time. We put out our books regularly, we're on time with all our books, nothing has ever been late, we're building a universe and that's a big part of it. If you look at people building universes - Dark Horse is a wonderful company, and we have great relationships with them and really admire and respect what they do, but when Jim Shooter and Mike Richardson sat down and talked to each other the first time, Mike's reaction was, "well you guys are really going head to head with Marvel, you're building a universe just like they have", and Mike said "I would never do that, we look for little niches that we can fill and do well around the area that Marvel has staked out." Jim's response was "I wouldn't know how to do what you do. I wouldn't be able to pick the next Concrete or the next Flaming Carrot and know that's going to be a success, but I do know how to make superhero comic book heroes and build a universe. I've been doing it since I was 13 years old and I've been doing it for 25 years and I believe that we can build that universe and make it work." First of all the word independent bothers me because, we're not. We're no more independent than Marvel is. The only thing that we're independent on is as John said, we're not locked into any preconceived notions on how to do this. So maybe we're a little more independent than Marvel is in our approach to things, but we are every bit as much a major as they are, we're just a younger major and have a lesser market share, but we believe when Marvel started DC was everything and Marvel was a small company starting out to try to gain market share. Now Marvel is the big player and if you look at the Barron's article, they say that it's very clear that Marvel's biggest problems are companies like us who are trying to do to them what they did to DC in the '60s, and the companies that can move faster and spot trends easier and are not locked into continuity. When Jim and I were looking at buying Marvel, one of the things we realized that we'd have to do is probably spend a year cleaning up the universe to get it to where we wanted it to be.

WIZARD: Any plans for trading cards?

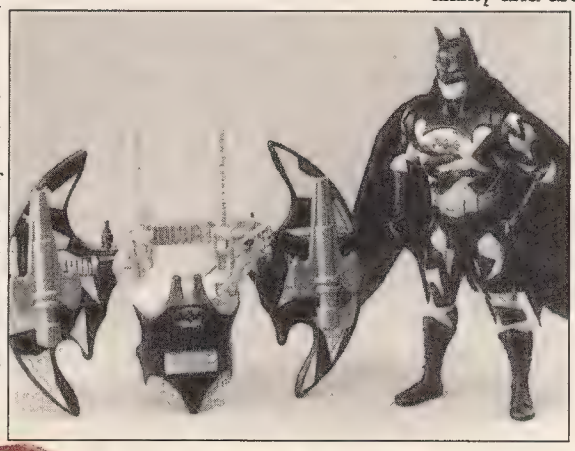
MASSARSKY: We have plans for everything. As you know, we did the Magnus trading cards that were in the first 8 issues of Magnus and we have some of those left over in uncut strips of three, so that we may actually be passing them out to stores as bag stuffers, just to let people have them who didn't get them in the first 8 books. Yes, we're always talking about trading cards. As you know, I'm a card collector myself, so being a card collector I am always enthralled with getting my own uncut sheets of things. Yes, we've talked to several people about it. One of the things we thought about, and we thought about it really hard, is the whole licensing area in trading cards. The way I look at it is I spend a lot of my life managing artists, managing musicians, and now what I'm doing is I'm managing characters, which isn't that much different. They all have a career and they have a life, and you have to manage them carefully. One of the things we don't want to do is overexpose properties or start things too soon, or be trying to play Madison Square Garden when we should be playing the Palladium. We're going to be smart in how we roll out things. We're definitely interested in licensing. We're definitely interested in trading cards. We're interested in holograms and everything else that is being done, although we will never do holograms to where they're not an added value to the book. We won't make multiple hologram covers. When we do promotions and marketing things we do them as added value, not as gimmicks. We do the giveaway of the Unity #0, we do the Magnus #0, we do the Barry Windsor-Smith 10 part poster of the final panel in the Solar #0 Alpha Omega series. We do the Harbinger coupons. We do something that gets people to read more of our books or buy more of our books to get the premium, but the premium has added value. It's not a extra cover or a different color or something like that. And we do extra covers or different colors - those will always be giveaways. Just to give to people as rewards for what they've done for us.

The New Toys!

by Vinnie Bertilucci

Judging form this year's International Toy Fair in New York City in February, this looks like the year for action figure collectors to catch up on the stuff they've been looking for. The pickings were very slim in the action figure category.

Kenner has more Batman figures this year, and to tie in with the upcoming sequel, will be producing Penguin (looking remarkably similar to the old Super Powers figure) and Catwoman figures. A nice surprise is the Robin figure. Straight from the comics, the Robin figure wears the new costume seen in the two hit mini-series. Robin will be appearing in the animated series set to premiere on Fox this fall. And in answer to the obvious next question, yes, Kenner will be doing a separate line based on the animated series. The figures have not been shown yet, as they're waiting to see what characters will be featured more often on the show. Good bets are Mr. Freeze, Joker, Two-Face, and perhaps Poison Ivy. With rumors abounding about DC and Kenner discussing things, we may see the return of the Super-powers line in a year of two. I expect the Villain and animation figures will do well, but there's only so many ways you can put Batman in different color suits and expect the line to sell.



Kenner's expanding the Terminator line as well, with four new Terminators, and both Sarah Connor and son. Fans of gross toys will love the Terminator endoskeleton flesh maker. Mix the flesh compounds and it gets cast into the included Terminator figure, and they tear the flesh off and it gets wounded in "battle." An interesting line, but not much room for expansion. Look at last year's Swamp Thing.

The folks at Toy Biz are riding high on X-Men popularity and are quadrupling their Marvel Super Heroes line this year. X-Force gets their own line, and there's new additions to the regular Marvel line as well (see page 61 for the full story).

JusToys, formerly known for the Marvel and other bendy toys, has jumped into the action market with a line based on the independent comic Zen, Intergalactic Ninja. Zen and his friends combat Lord Contaminous, who is planning to destroy the world and turn it into a polluted wasteland.

The figures look nice, and with the Archie comic premiering to publicize it, expect a good start (Let's be honest. Toxic Crusaders and Captain Planet did the same anti-pollution kind of thing last year. Toxie had three movies behind him, and Captain Planet had Ted Turner. Toxie is already gone, and Planet probably won't last the year. I don't expect Zen to last too long, so grab them while you can.)

In addition, JusToys has a line based on the CBS animated series Fish Police. Several of the characters will be available in both action figure and plush forms. This line should do well if the show succeeds, otherwise it'll get lumped in with all those Dune toys in the closeout aisle.

Hasbro's planning an interesting year. No surprise, GI Joe is back strong, with a wide assortment of action figures, including the spring action Ninja Force, a Drug Elimination Force, and new recruits to the Eco-Warriors. None of the vehicles come with figures any more, save for the two new Battle copters and the new Air Commando gliders.

The big news is the return of the 12-inch Joe. The Hall of Fame series will feature full size versions of Duke, Stalker, Snake Eyes and Cobra Commander. Each figure will be individually numbered, and even the packaging in worth saving (you probably won't be able to find the Hall of Fame line unless you're standing there when they unpack them).

Also premiering this year is a line based on the syndicated cartoon James Bond Jr. All of your favorite

Bond villains are back, spiffed up for the 90s. OddJob, Dr. No, Jaws, and lots more including four different James figures, in an assortment of action gear. These figures will get some sales, but unless the show takes off, it'll be a mostly collector's toy.

The big surprises this year seems to come from the little toy company that could, Playmates. Some people were predicting a downsizing of the Turtles line this year, maybe as few as 10-15 new figures. Well, would you believe FIFTY? Turtles in every imaginable shape and size. Birthday Turtles in clown suits. Beach party turtles that squirt water. Figures of all the characters as they appeared in the films. THREE new Aprils. More military figures, including turtles in coonskin caps and doughboy uniforms. The coolest addition are Mutating figures, that change from human (or reptile) to mutated form with a few twists of the wrist. But the big one, the holy grail for collectors will be the Chrome-plated 5th anniversary collector's turtle, individually numbered, priced at under 10 dollars.

The two Disney lines are expanding this year, with new figures to the Darkwing Duck and Tail Spin lines. Darkwing will gain GizmoDuck, Morgana Macawber, Quackerjack, Liquidator, Negaduck and the delayed Agent Grizzlykoff and J. Gander Hooter.

But wait there's more! Two NEW line this year from Playmates will be the Addams Family (based on the new animated series from Hanna-Barbera) and (drumroll) Star Trek: The Next Generation. 1992 will see the ST:TNG figures, '93 will see the release of the original series line and a line based on the soon to premiere third Star Trek series, currently in production. The figures are a beauty to see, with detail far superior to the abortive Galoob line from several years back. You can bet that Playmates won't drop the ball like Galoob did.

Also don't miss Brian Cunningham's review of the new Superhero Figures introduced at the New York Toy Fair..beginning on page 61!

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The Master of Dreams, Lost Loves,

NEIL GAIMAN

By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

"I suppose being British affects my view of comics in a peculiar sort of way," explains Neil Gaiman, award-winning writer and co-creator of DC's *Sandman*. "When I was growing up and reading American comics, the whole thing was set in this impossible, fantastic, make-believe world. Pizza parlors—no British kid in the 1960s knew what a pizza parlor was; or fire hydrants—what are all these strange round things all over America? They were every bit as strange and peculiar—and every bit as unbelievable—as the fact that you had people zooming around in brightly colored costumes."

Gaiman's latest trophy is a bust of fantasy/horror author H.P. Lovecraft, representative of his having won the World Fantasy Award for Best Short Story for his work (with artist Charles Vess) on *Sandman* #19, "A Midsummer Night's Dream". And that slightly skewed British outlook on American life and American comics characters has made *Sandman* a surprise hit...doubly a surprise because it's pretty hard to pin down exactly what kind of story Gaiman is telling. It's even hard for him.

"Part of the joy of *Sandman* for me is that it isn't in any one genre. It's definitely fantasy—but then again, fantasy is a genre that includes all fiction, which kind of gets me off the hook", Gaiman laughs. "Sometimes it's horror, sometimes it's not. In the case of 'Season of Mists', it was a baroque theological fantasy. The current storyline, 'A Game of You'—I haven't a clue what it is. I probably won't until it's over.

"It goes all over the place; that's what I like about it. It keeps me interested," he continues. "I realized recently that I've been working on *Sandman* for nearly four years and about three years that it's been published. If it was a 'monster-of-the-months' title, I would have gone mad or given up ages ago. I think the same applies to pretty much anything it could have been. *Sandman's* just careering down the slopes, with no particular attention to what it hits or destroys along the way."

Gaiman is quite adamant about the idea that nearly *any* story can be told within the confines of the Endless family...even a kind of 'little kid" parody; "The story I'm trying to figure out right now—which has somehow become strangely important to me—is Sugar and Spike," he points out. "I want to do a Sandman story that's sort of like one of those old Sugar and Spike stories, with the little Sandman tripping over his little cloak and the little Death sort of following him around, picking him up. If I can pull that one off, I can probably pull off anything."

That leads to an interesting question—is Sandman and his family a part of the DC Universe, the universe that includes Superman, Batman and all the rest? Gaiman says yes.

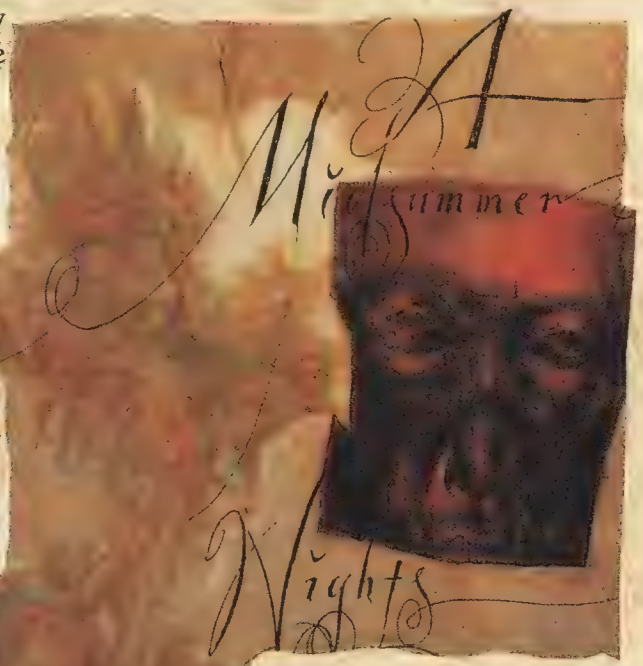
"*Sandman* is actually tied in to the DC Universe—it's just a long bus ride away," he laughs. "You *can* get there, but you have to be prepared to queue for hours and wait for something to come along. It's definitely sort of the same world; part of the problem is the 'mature readers' label. Comic-book universes are huge things. The DC Universe contains multitudes; the Marvel Universe contains

multitudes. You have, for example, a number of comics DC publishes in which magic may not exist—side by side with comics in which magic does exist...which is one of the points I tried to clarify in *Books of Magic*. As far as I'm concerned, the Sandman definitely runs the dreams of all the people in the Universe...but I don't tend to view it as the DC Universe unless I want to go in and do something like kill Element Girl, or my recent failed attempt to drag in the Bizarros".

Mr. Sandman. Bring Me a Dream... It's won awards. It's the most successful of the "British" stable of DC comics—but what, exactly, is Neil Gaiman's tale of the Endless really all about?

The Bizarros? Those imperfect, white-faced duplicates of Superman? Were they in *Sandman*? Yes, they were—or at least Gaiman *wanted* them to be. "The production error on that was the funniest thing about it," he says. "I wrote it as the Bizarros, because I thought nobody would mind, what with them being out of continuity; they vanished off in Crisis, so I thought nobody would mind my having them as comic characters. And some people at DC did. And so, after it was already lettered, somebody went in and stuck 'Weirdzo' over all the places where it said 'Bizarro'...except one fell off and confused everybody. I've heard wonderful conspiracy theories about that, but one simply fell off. By the time Shawn McManus drew the second issue, he knew it had to be different, so the character has a big 'H' for 'Hyperman' on his chest, instead of a big 'S'.

"The way I try to do stuff like that in *Sandman*, anyway, is that anybody who recognized the comic-book history will get the joke," Gaiman notes, "and anybody who doesn't, it's not important. They don't feel like they're being excluded".



So is a Gaiman-scripted, straight-forward superhero story out of the question? "I'm playing about a little with standard superhero genre stuff in the new *Miracleman* storyline—'The Silver Age'. I wouldn't rule it out completely, but I don't think I'd be terribly good at superheroes," Gaiman admits. "Writing superheroes is an art form in and of itself and one that very few people do well. Alan Moore, when he wanted to do it, did it well; I think Grant Morrison's done it very well from time to time; I think Frank Miller does it brilliantly. But I think it takes a certain mindset.

Still, Gaiman thinks the long-underwear set can be useful in coming up with settings for the stores he *wants* to tell. "There's a Batman story I'm supposed to do with Simon Bisley, when we both have time...which is why it keeps walking to the back of the queue and waiting there, as things come up for both of us. Whenever one of us has freed up a slot, the other is completely in over his head. I was just about to get ready to do it when Simon was finishing *Lobo* and then he got grabbed for *Batman/Judge Dredd*. I think Simon's at a point where he could probably start working on it, but I'm completely up to my eyes in other stuff. It's a story about Batman going to the circus; and I'm doing it more because I've always wanted to do a really good, dark circus story—like 'Something Wicked This Way Comes' or 'Blind Voices' or *The Circus of Dr. Lao*—than because I really want to write a Batman story."

"What the readers respond to in *Sandman* is not people as categories...but people as people. People who are every bit as strange and as interesting as the ones you meet in real life...I hope."

On the other hand, Gaiman agrees that there are superheroish elements in *Sandman*. "There's definitely a level on which Sandman is my creating a superhero I'd be happy writing. One of the things I like best about Sandman is all the wonderful powers he has...and they really have nothing to do with anything. They don't get used much, because he doesn't go around doing things heroically. Somebody told me recently that Marvel was pleased because they announced that *Sleepwalker* was '*Sandman* done right'—which I thought was terribly funny and very sweet. They have a dream character who goes around battling things and meeting Spider-Man! Mine never battles anything and I doubt he'll ever meet Spider-Man!"

One mark of excellent work is that it intrigues the reader, leads him to ask questions about the events and characters within it—questions that the creator may not have answers for. *Sandman* is no different. The fan speculations on the nature of Dream's family, the Endless, are themselves seemingly endless. And Gaiman is not prepared—yet—to quell that speculation.

"I will sort of beg off on what the nature of the Endless is...if only because the storyline after 'A Game of You' is about the Endless," he points out. "Frankly, until it's all in print, I'm not sure I can give you definitive answers. A lot of *Sandman*, for me, is as much a process of finding out as it is of making up. I'm quite looking forward to that one, because there's a lot of things I'm looking forward to finding out. That's the one in which Sandman and Delirium head off to find the missing member of the family. And the one in which, with any luck, we'll learn quite a bit about the Endless."

That's very nice, Neil—but how about some specifics? Are these real people we're dealing with?

"Death describes Dream at one point as an anthropomorphic personification, and I think she was probably on the money", Gaiman answers. "They're not real—they're ideas. Ideas that are related to each other and that wander on and get pissed off and do things. And occasionally get laid, get drunk and and get mad. Then again, at the end of a day, most people are just ideas. They're about as real as they want to be".

Okay, we'll buy that. But are the Endless "beginning-less" as well? Do they have a starting point?

"In potential, the Endless pre-existed sentient life; Destiny certainly did," Gaiman replies. "Death would definitely have existed in potential, at least at the beginning of sentient life. Dream would have existed very shortly after that. I think some of them came into existence as you got sentient life and the

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need for them. Some of them had to exist at least in potential—sort of like the concept of potential energy in physics. They always tried to persuade me that was real and not just something they were making up for my benefit. 'A stone at the top of a hill has potential energy, and if it rolls down it has kinetic energy, and when it gets to the bottom it has potential energy again.'"

Some of the more psychologically oriented fans have referred to the Endless as a dysfunctional family—and that's a phrase Gaiman dislikes. "I'm starting to get irritated with the phrase 'dysfunctional family'—it's this wonderful American buzzword. I'm actually getting to the point where I feel that what people now call dysfunctional families were what we used to just call families in the old days. They argue; one is not listening to the others. I think, in their own way, the Endless are a strangely functional family; they each have a function to perform and do it. But they are definitely a family, and in the buzzwords of today, that definitely carries dysfunctionality along with it, just like everything else. They're fun—especially when you sit them down around a table."

"There's definitely a level on which Sandman is my creating a superhero I'd be happy writing."

Another element of *Sandman* is the real people—the humans who interact with the Endless in one way or another. And like the real people in *our* world, they come in a myriad of types; gay, straight, sane, insane, decent, violent. Gaiman says, surprisingly, he has never gotten any real objections to any of the people or themes he has explored in *Sandman*—either from within or without DC's offices.

"I wish I could say I *had* gotten flack from within DC or the letters pages or somewhere on my treatment of violence or sexuality. The only flack I really remember was from that Coalition on Television Violence, who said the Dr. Dee episode was the most disgusting, violent, revolting comic they'd ever read. Then again, they rated *Wonder Woman* even more violent and these are the people who counted 76 individual acts of violence in the Smurfs on TV...so I don't think it's possible to take them terribly seriously. It's weird, innit? You'd think people would complain. I keep expecting people to complain. In 'Season of Mists' I had Lucifer quitting; I thought, 'Hey, this will really go down big in the Bible Belt', and everybody just said, 'Hey, great story!!'"

Apparently, nobody at DC is particularly worried about the kind of stories Gaiman is telling, either. They certainly don't keep him on a tight rein. "The only outline DC got from me for 'A Game of You' was 'I think I'm going to bring back Barbie from 'A Doll's House'. And the editor said, 'Okay, I like Barbie; that'll be nice,'" he recalls. They sort of trust me, except when I occasionally use the Bizarros without permission. I've never gotten knocked into line. One of the sweet things about *Sandman* is that very few people seem to turn around and say, 'This comic has lesbians in it'; what they tend to say is, 'This comic has really good people in it'. I think that's much more important and more interesting—that what they respond to in *Sandman* is not people as categories...but people as people. People who are every bit as strange and as interesting as the ones you meet in real life...I hope."

One other big fan game lately is answering the question "When is Gaiman going to leave *Sandman*? And will DC cancel the title when he does?" It's a series of questions Gaiman is somewhat amused by.

"People keep trying to pin me down to numbers, as to when I'm leaving the book. People ask, 'How much more have you got to do'? and I answer, 'Well, there's three storylines and if I can get them done in time, that's about 18 issues', he notes. "And then they immediately start totting them up on their fingers, 'Oh, issue 45 then'? And I say, 'About then'.

"The next thing I see in print is '*Sandman* due to finish at #45'. Now we're starting to get letters in saying, 'I hear Neil's leaving next

week,'" he laughs. "I really don't want to put a number to it, partly because the storylines have a disconcerting habit of creeping on an extra couple of issues. The ones planned for six issues end up taking eight. And I'm never completely sure how many short stories I want to do before I get completely sick of doing short stories and want to get back into a long story. I would estimate right now that we will probably finish the story that began in *Sandman* #1 somewhere between *Sandman* #50 and #60...but if it ended at #47, it ends there. If it goes to #61, so be it. I haven't got this *Cerebus*-like 300-issue concept.

But even Gaiman admits that the end of *Sandman* may not be the end of stories about the Endless. "DC seems to be getting used to the idea that *Sandman* should end when I end it. The first time I mentioned it, they'd all turn pale and drop their forks", he says. "They're starting to come to terms with the idea that this is something they might well do...partly because I don't necessarily see the end of *Sandman* as a monthly book as the end of all Sandman forever. I'm currently playing around with the idea of sometime doing a series of seven books, one for each of the Endless—seven 48-page stories. But there's a level on which I tend to feel that, for a story to actually mean anything, it has to end. Otherwise, you become a soap opera, where the only guarantee is that no story ever finishes. I think an ending gives what's gone before some importance.

"I also like the idea of not finishing because sales are poor or anything, or because I'm bored or overcommitted, but finishing because the story's over," he concludes.

And when *Sandman* is over—where does Neil Gaiman go from there? "I don't ever see myself committing myself to another ongoing monthly series again—and it's always foolish to say never", he answers. "A monthly series for me is a lot of hard work. A *Sandman* script is somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 words and takes me from two to three weeks to write. That means everything else I do—screenplays, novels, short stories, other comics—gets done in that fourth week. I enjoy the discipline, I enjoy having to come up with a story. I enjoy the wonderful power of serial fiction—I sort of know how Dickens must have felt. There's a level on which, when people receive little chunks of a story on a predictable schedule, they get far more involved than they do just sitting and reading it as a whole.

"I'd like to get to the point where I'm spending roughly six months of the year working in comics and the other six doing something else. I really don't care what the something else is—probably a novel here and there, some other stuff. I'd like to get that balance there."

Speaking of other work, Gaiman has just begun work on a second attempt at a screenplay for his and Terry Pratchett's novel, *Good Omens*. And he says *Sandman* has also been optioned for a movie, but he has no intention of getting involved in that one. "I have to say my initial reaction to it is simply, 'Great—invite me to the premiere'. Learning a lot about the constraints of movies and of trying to tell a story in 100 minutes, I look at *Sandman* and think, 'Would I really enjoy barbecuing my own baby'? I've come to the conclusion that, with movies, you either get in there with both feet and you write a script and find the money and the backers, you direct it, you make it—or you stand as far back as possible; drive the pick-up to California, pile the money in and drive back."

Returning to the point that began this discussion, Gaiman notes that British comics writers seem a bit more well-rounded than their American counterparts. "There seems to be a tendency among the British writers—and I wouldn't put as anything more than that—to be less into comics and comics only than their American counterparts. I think a lot of American comics writers write comics and read comics...and that's all they write and read. The Brits are more likely to like comics as just one of the things you can write or read...and therefore we tend to drag out in outside influences. It's either that or something they put in the water."

VENOM

A brief history of Spider-Man's Deadliest Foe

The origin of one of comicdom's hottest villains takes us back about eight years and into a series known as Marvel Super-Heroes Secret Wars. To sum up quickly, a god-like being known as the Beyonder abducted a handful of heroes and villains from Earth and forced them to battle each other.

During one such fight, Spider-Man's familiar red-and-blue costume was badly torn and replaced with an alien fabric...the black-and-white costume. Oddly enough, this outfit would respond to Peter Parker's mental commands, and change into any kind of clothing Peter could think of (street clothes, other costumes, you name it). It even had its own built-in web shooters!

Upon Spidey's return to Earth, readers of the Spider-Man line of comics watching as the costume slithered off a clothes hanger and assumed control of the sleeping Peter Parker, using him for unknown purposes.

After noticing how tired he was beginning to feel, and growing more and more curious as to the true nature of the costume, Spidey paid a visit to Reed Richards, leader of the Fantastic Four. There, he discovered the horrific truth...the costume was alive! Not only that, but it was attempting to permanently bond with our hero!

After a brief skirmish with the Fantastic Four and the wall crawler, the costume was captured and held at FF headquarters (after Reed Richards discovered its vulnerability to intense sound). A shaken Spider-Man then bid his thanks and farewell to Dr. Richards, and returned home thinking the ordeal was ended. But the costume quickly escaped and began its search for Spider-Man, vengeance burning in its alien mind.

Meanwhile, Spider-Man was busy dealing with a deranged serial killer known as the Sin Eater. During this time, Emil Gregg, a mentally disturbed young man, came forward and admitted to the Sin Eater's crimes, though he was innocent. Eddie Brock, a journalist for the Daily Globe, "broke the story"

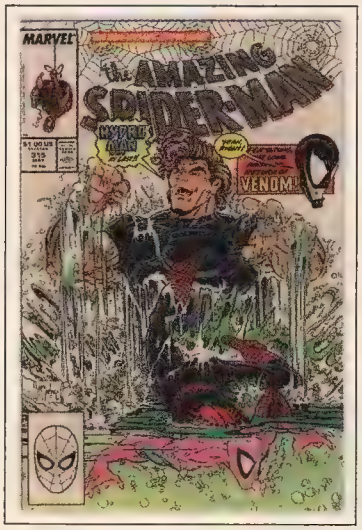
using the false information given to him by Emil. Brock's article was an instant success, making the headlines and becoming the talk of the town— for about two hours. That's how long it took Spider-Man to bring in the real Sin Eater. The Globe became a laughing stock and Brock was fired, forced to become a "hack" journalist. Writing venomous articles about celebrities and "Bigfoot was my daughter" type stories in scandal rags was the only way Brock could make a living. Having gone from well-respected journalist to questionable hack, Brock was now a broken man, focusing his anger on Spider-Man. Without his interference, thought Brock, the real Sin Eater would have remained unknown, and Brock would still be a respected journalist.

Elsewhere, Peter Parker was about to change into his Spider-suit when the escaped alien costume made its move. Altering itself to appear like Spidey's traditional red-and-blue outfit, the alien being tricked Peter into putting it on. As soon as Spidey realized what was happening, he desperately tried to peel the costume off and go for help, but to no avail. The costume prevented him from reaching the Fantastic Four. Again, Spidey appeared to be doomed.

Remem-bering that the alien was vulnerable to intense sound, Spidey made his way to a church bell tower, where he was willing to sacrifice his own life to be free of the alien. The ear-shattering noise of the ringing bells forced the costume off Spider-Man. It escaped, leaving the web-slinger to die in the tower.

That's when the extraordinary occurred. The costume had learned emotions from being with Peter for so long. It felt rejected by him, yet it cared for him. So the costume returned to the tower, and in saving Spidey from certain death, it sacrificed itself for its "master."

Or so it seemed. The creature was actually now living in the church, feeling alone and rejected. Think about it: How would you feel if someone took you from your home, brought you to



another planet, used you, imprisoned you and tried to kill you... just for being you? Eddie Brock entered the church. Contemplating suicide, alone and rejected, and still hating Spider-Man, he attracted the alien's attention. It had found a new home, a home named Eddie Brock, and the evil known as Venom was born. An evil with one goal: The death of Spider-Man.

Combining the alien's "living skin" abilities with its super-strength, organic webbing, and an invisibility to Spider-Man's spider-sense, Venom is undoubtedly the most dangerous foe Spider-Man has ever faced!

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Who's Who In *Batman Returns*

By Andy Mangels

Back in Wizard #6, I reviewed the script for Batman II as written by Sam Hamm. Tim Burton didn't like that script; instead he commissioned a script by Dan Waters (of Heathers fame), with later revisions by Wesley Strick (Cape Fear). This month, with the film almost finished shooting, let's take a look at what's been uncovered so far about Batman Returns.

Tim Burton is putting finishing touches on the film in Los Angeles. Tim's tenure on the film, known on the Warner lot as DicTel Productions, finds him returning almost solo to guide the second one to completion. After replacing Batman scripter Sam Hamm and designer Anton Furst, Burton's surrounded himself with yes-men who kowtow to his version of the caped crusader and Gotham City. Whether this more Burton-ized Batman will click with the fans will be seen in June.

Michael Keaton returns to his role, with a slightly altered Batman costume. He's reportedly much gloomier and less distracted in the film. His past paramour, Vicki Vale, is said to be referred to in a scene which implies that they had a major falling out.

Michael Gough returns as Alfred. Not much you can do with this character,

but one line of the film has been leaked out. When Alfred berates Batman at one point, Bruce reportedly replies, "Alfred, who let Vicki Vale into the Batcave? I'm down there working, I turn around, 'Oh, hi, Vicki, have a seat...'"

Pat Hingle returns as Commissioner Gordon, the only other character returning from the first Bat-film. He has more scenes in this film.

Danny DeVito plays the Penguin/Oswald Cobblepot. His costume is very similar to the comic one, though darker and more "Burton-esque." He has webbed hands and feet and a beak-like nose. He uses booby-trapped umbrellas that include, say set people, a sword-umbrella and a heli-copter-umbrella. Though Warner has a "no comment," Hollywood sources reveal that the mutant child was abandoned at birth by his parents and was raised by penguins at the Gotham Zoo. As an adult, he gains the help of Max Schreck in a bid to run for mayor of Gotham City. Much of his campaign is reportedly based on destroying the image of Batman. According to one newspaper, Penguin and Batman have a battle to the death at the movie's climax. If this is true, it will me two Batman staple villains disposed of in as many films. Why Burton would do this is unknown.

Michelle Pfeiffer plays Selina Kyle/Catwoman. Catwoman's costume is a black body-suit (like the one she wears in the comics), though it's ripped and torn more. It has huge heels, and razor talons. Selina is reputedly the mousy secretary of Max Schreck, who is killed when she finds out too much. As weird as it sounds, sources reveal that she's brought back to life by some kind of cat-CPR by hundreds of felines. Revived, she becomes a villainess and develops a love-hate relationship with Batman as Catwoman, while at the same time getting romantically entangled with Bruce Wayne. Though rumors of Bruce's libido bringing him to bed another woman on the first date have surfaced in the papers, Bruce and Selina supposedly only indulge in heavy petting and kissing. She is also reported to have several death scenes in the movie, but we all know that cats have nine lives.

Christopher Walken plays Max Schreck, the millionaire associate of the Penguin who helps him in his campaign. Max is also reported to be one of Gotham's most powerful and beloved businessmen, but he has a shady side. His much sexually harassed secretary is the mousy Selina Kyle and his bodyguard is Chip (I don't know who plays this role).

Marion Wayans...this is a sticky one. The younger brother to Keenan Ivory, Damon, Kim and Shawn Wayans of In Living Color fame originally had "a small role in an unnamed part at 'the kid.' When publicity got out that the black teenager was slated for the role or Robin, publicists went nutso. They have repeatedly told me that Robin was never in the film, that there are no orphans (reportedly, The Kid is one), no kids in costumes, no teen sidekicks to Batman. They've claimed that Marlon Wayans' small role was never given a name other than "The Kid." They've since claimed that his part has been dropped from the film entirely.

Several things point out that the publicists may be lying though their teeth. Marlon Wayans is still listed in the cast in all the major Hollywood trade papers, three months after he was supposedly dropped. No official studio press release has been sent listing his deletion from the cast. Plus, according to insiders, his role in the film was not insubstantial, and it would take major rewriting of the

last third of the film to lose his input.

Sources reveal that The Kid is a grease-monkey whiz-kid mechanic who helps Batman fix the Batmobile, and saves his life. He later helps Batman save Gotham from killer penguins. Even more astounding, people in the know have revealed that The Kid's uniform has an "R" in a circle on it and he tells Batman he likes to be called...can you guess? "Robin!"

Rumors around Hollywood point out that Warner Brothers is skittish about having a black Robin in the film, and may have indeed cut his character out, or maybe just the scenes where he identifies himself. You can find out whether or not this is the case in June.

Paul Reubens, better known as Pee-wee Herman, plays Oswald (Penguin) Cobblepot's father in a small cameo role at the beginning of the film. Repulsed by his child, he and his wife get rid of it.

Jan Hooks, the Saturday Night Live/Designing Women veteran, plays Juliet, of the Punch and Juliet team that helps the Penguin get his new monocled/tuxedoed image, courtesy of Max Schreck.

Michael Murphy plays the current Mayor of Gotham City. Having pissed Schreck off, he finds himself running against the hideous mutant, the Penguin.

Gotham City: Now filmed on the backlots of Warner Studios in LA rather than the London Pinewood Studios, expect Gotham to look different. Many landmarks from the first film will not show up in this one. As in Hamm's script, the movie apparently takes place a few days before Christmas.

Penguin's Gang: Played by hosts of extras and stuntmen, the gang is called the Red Triange Circus Gang, so named because of the red triangles painted over their left eyes. Apparently all are ex-carnival freaks and rowdies who raze Gotham at Penguin's orders. Sources say that some of them reconfigure the Batmobile's innards, causing some hairy remote control chases.

The Batmobile: Convention fans have seen glimpses of the thin Bat-Bullet in a convention trailer. The slimmed-down Bat-Bullet is actually a part of the Batmobile, used in a chase scene as Batman and The Kid need to escape through a tight alley.

The Bat-Ski-Boat: Many scenes with this were filmed at Universal Studios in Hollywood. Also seen in the convention trailer, this really does sound stupid.

The Riddler is reported to be mentioned towards the end of the film.

There you have it. The inside track on What's What and Who's Who in Batman Returns. Thanks to the many reliable sources that helped out with bits of news.

BRUTES

TECHNIQUES IN COLORING

By Paul Mounts

If you love to draw, here's your first lesson in comic book art! As a commerical artists/illustrator, I'm frequently asked about the basics, so here goes:

While Dr. Martin's dyes are popular, fast and very bright, corrections and retouch work are nearly impossible (not to mention the problems of reproducing many of the colors). That's why I generally stick to acrylics and gouache for most of the work I do; for transparent colors the Rotring line works very well. However, I would suggest that you experiment with anything that will make a mark on paper to achieve the effect you're looking for: colored pencils, markers, crayons, pastels, coffee, anything.

Step One

Here we see the art just before frisketing, with small detail areas already painted in watercolor by hand.

Step Two

After covering the entire piece with frisket and cutting around all major areas, the frisket is lifted off the blue-black portions of Venom. Then a blue wash of Rotring is sprayed, followed by black to beef up the shadow areas.

& BABES

I usually like to work on a hot press scanner board for airbrush work because of the incredibly forgiving surface. After laying color down, I can erase or scrape away highlights without damaging the board.

I use two airbrushes, the Pasche V and the Pasche AB Turbo (great for highly detailed work). I also go through obscene amounts of Frisk brand frisket (matte finish), although you can get away with a lot simply using loose frisketing cut from acetate, blotter paper or even paper towel.

With that out of the way, check out the step-by-step shown below. Its not overly complicated, showing a rather alien-looking Venom vs. Solar, Man of the Atom. It takes a lot of practice to become proficient at this kind of illustration, so don't fret if you think your progress isn't going fast enough. And you can't rush a drawing no matter how experienced you are. Let me know how you're doing, what you'd like to see, etc., by writing the editor at Wizard. And keep drawing!

Step Three

Replace the frisket from the blue areas; lift it from the red of Solar. Spray red. Then, if needed, spraying a transparent yellow over the red can really brighten the color. An alizarin crimson adds shodows.

Step Four

Note the background. After spraying yellow over the upper 7/8 or so, various oranges, reds and purples are sprayed freehand in a loose, unplanned way to simulate fiery clouds. This finished artword is used on the Planet Comics ad elsewhere in this issue.

WIZARD: Where do you go to become a colorist? Is there a special school?

MOUNTS: With coloring it's a little different because you can go to art school and take life drawing classes to learn anatomy or drawing from life, color is a little harder.

WIZARD: Did you ever go to school to learn how to color, or art classes?

MOUNTS: I went to the American Academy of Art in Chicago for two years, got a degree and then went into advertising- storyboarding - and got a lot of my color sense from that.

WIZARD: Is that where you got most of your training?

MOUNTS: Yes. I would say that a good art school is obviously indispensable. I think you need that kind of training. It's important to know how to paint. You can't really learn anything about color by reading or looking at comics. It's a special discipline in and of itself, but you need to know more than that before you can just go and get work.

WIZARD: So the storyboard is good - it gives you a great base.

MOUNTS: As I said - a good art school or a painting background is always for color. Apprenticing in a studio like I did during storyboard is a great training ground.

WIZARD: Why did you get out of advertising and get into comic books?

MOUNTS: Various reasons. Frankly, I got tired of drawing cereal boxes every day. When you're drawing storyboards you get to draw refrigerators and hub caps and Goodyear tires and things like that and when you're working in comics you get to work on a lot more productive things than cereal boxes. Editors are a lot easier to deal with than art directors at ad agencies.

WIZARD: I bet. What was the first published work that you did?

MOUNTS: Color work?

WIZARD: Color, or did you do some inking or penciling?

MOUNTS: Actually, the first published work I ever did was an issue of the Raven that I sold them for Now Comics. It was the last issue of the Raven. It was #6.

WIZARD: What year was that?

MOUNTS: Either '86 or '87. I could look it up and let you know. Roughly '86. WIZARD: How did you get hooked up with the crowd that you're with now?

MOUNTS: I had been doing work for some independents around town like Now and for companies like that and took a trip to New York and showed them samples of Continuity and had gotten some work from them. I took some of my sample work in to Howard Mackie at Marvel and showed him the stuff I had been doing for Continuity and did an actual color sample of one of the covers to show them how the book would look in a finished state and that's how I got the job, and they've been keeping me busy ever since.

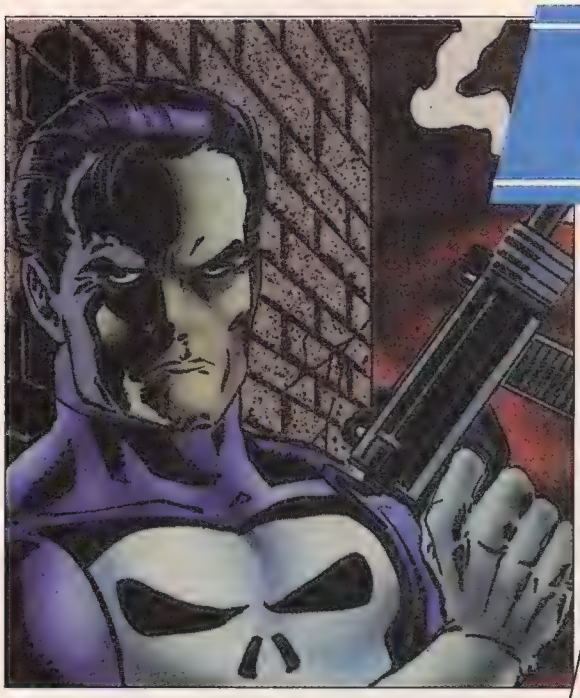
WIZARD: Who was the first to give you a job? Howard Mackie?

MOUNTS: Howard Mackie was the first editor with Marvel.

WIZARD: When you color a piece, say a single or group shot, where do you start?

MOUNTS: To tell you the truth, usually when I'm starting, especially if it's going to be a large single shot, a poster, a promotional piece, something like

Art Q & A With Paul Mounts



that, I usually just sit and stare at it for about a half an hour, and kind of work up a color scheme in my head. If you were doing a painting you would work out a color rough - say if you were painting a paperback cover or something like that. On something like comic blue lines, obviously the deadline is a lot tighter and you don't have 16 copies of it, and instead of messing around different color schemes, I usually just study it and figure it out in my head first, then I'll usually start in with the flesh tones, once I get the flesh tones, whether it will be warm or cool, light or dark, then I can start the other colors around that in the lightest pattern.

WIZARD: What's the most difficult thing to color?

MOUNTS: Flesh tones. Because if they're too pink then they're all going to look like Barbie dolls and it it's too yellow then everyone is going to look like they have a tropical disease. To get a warm flesh tone that's just right is probably the most difficult thing to do.

WIZARD: Are certain artists easier to color than others? And who is easy and who is difficult?

MOUNTS: Ooh, that's a good question! There are artists that are easier to color. I would hate to answer the question about who is difficult to color.

WIZARD: Why? This is an open forum?

MOUNTS: I don't want anybody getting mad at me. Some of the artists that are easiest to color are Art Adams, he is really easy to color, I really enjoy working on his stuff. I just finished a poster by Ron Lim that was really easy to color.

WIZARD: When you say easier that's a lot more implicating than who's difficult. Because if they're easy then their stuff is very loose and open. Not very detailed.

MOUNTS: I don't necessarily agree with you.

When Jim Lee did the X-Men trading cards they were drawn in a fairly different style than he draws the comic book. Not a lot of inkline rendering in them like you see in the comics. They're very open, linear drawings, kinda almost like Frank Miller-ish in the way that the line is just there for information. But that left it open for me to do a lot of color, but the structure was all there.

WIZARD: What are some of the more famous pieces you've colored?

MOUNTS: The biggest thing I've colored recently is the X-Men trading cards. Jim Lee is the hottest guy in the business.

WIZARD: Did he pick you?

MOUNTS: Well I color all the Marvel trading cards - the first two sets that have come out and a third set that I'm working on now that will be out I guess in April or May. Whether Jim Lee knew I was going to do them beforehand or not I don't know. I have to assume that he must have seen my work just because when he drew them he did leave them open for a lot of color. He left an awful lot to color, so hopefully whoever he felt was coloring them he trusted.

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WIZARD

Uncanny X-Men #184

Artist: John Romita, Jr
Writer: Chris Claremont
Publisher: Marvel
Release Date: August, 1984

While we're on the subject of hot news, check out the first appearance of Excalibur's resident dragon, Lockheed!

Ah yes, another one of those pesky X-Books here in the Wizard Comic Watch. Is it me or did every relevent thing in the Marvel Universe originate in a mutant title? Seems that way these days... Anyway, what makes *Uncanny X-Men* #184 such a hot ticket? Try it's the first appearance of Forge, resident "Mr. Fixit" and reserve member of the X-Men. Yup, back in the days before he was a Rambo look-alike, mild mannered Forge debuted at the beginning of the X-Men/Dire Wraith war. After almost one hundred issues, he developed into the hot star he is today. Between this news, the relatively low price and scarcity of this issue, it's definitely a book worth looking into.

COMIC WATCH

Amazing Spider-Man #265

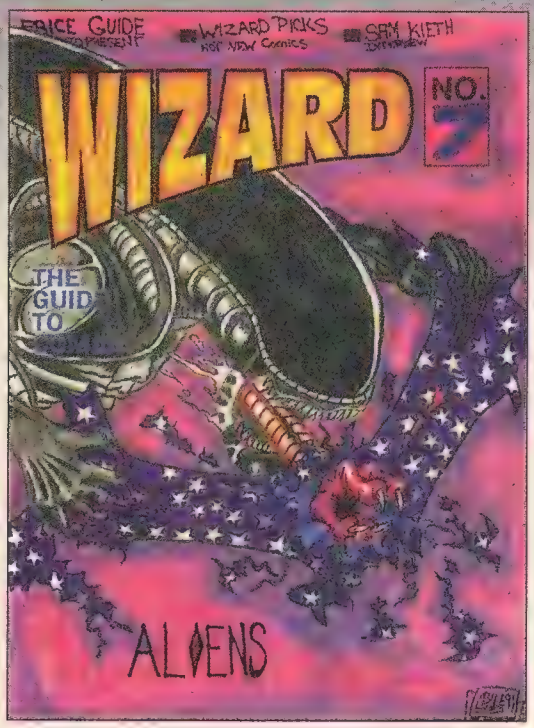
Artist: Ron Frenz
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Publisher: Marvel
Release Date: June, 1985

Nope, no X-Men here, but who needs 'em? We've got the first appearance of that platinum blonde in the skin-tight suit, Silver Sable! Hurray!! Yup, that hot babe (now in her own monthly series) made her dynamic comic debut in this historic issue. With such strong ties to the Marvel Universe, and a supporting cast which includes Paladin, the Absorbing Man, and the Sandman, the new *Sable* title has a chance at becoming a Marvel super-hit. If this happens, who knows where *Amazing Spider-Man* #265 will go.

Also check out the "Assassin Nation Plot" storyline in *Amazing Spider-Man* #320-325 for more info on Silver Sable.

Amazing ART

The Showcase Of Future Comic Book Illustrators Of America!



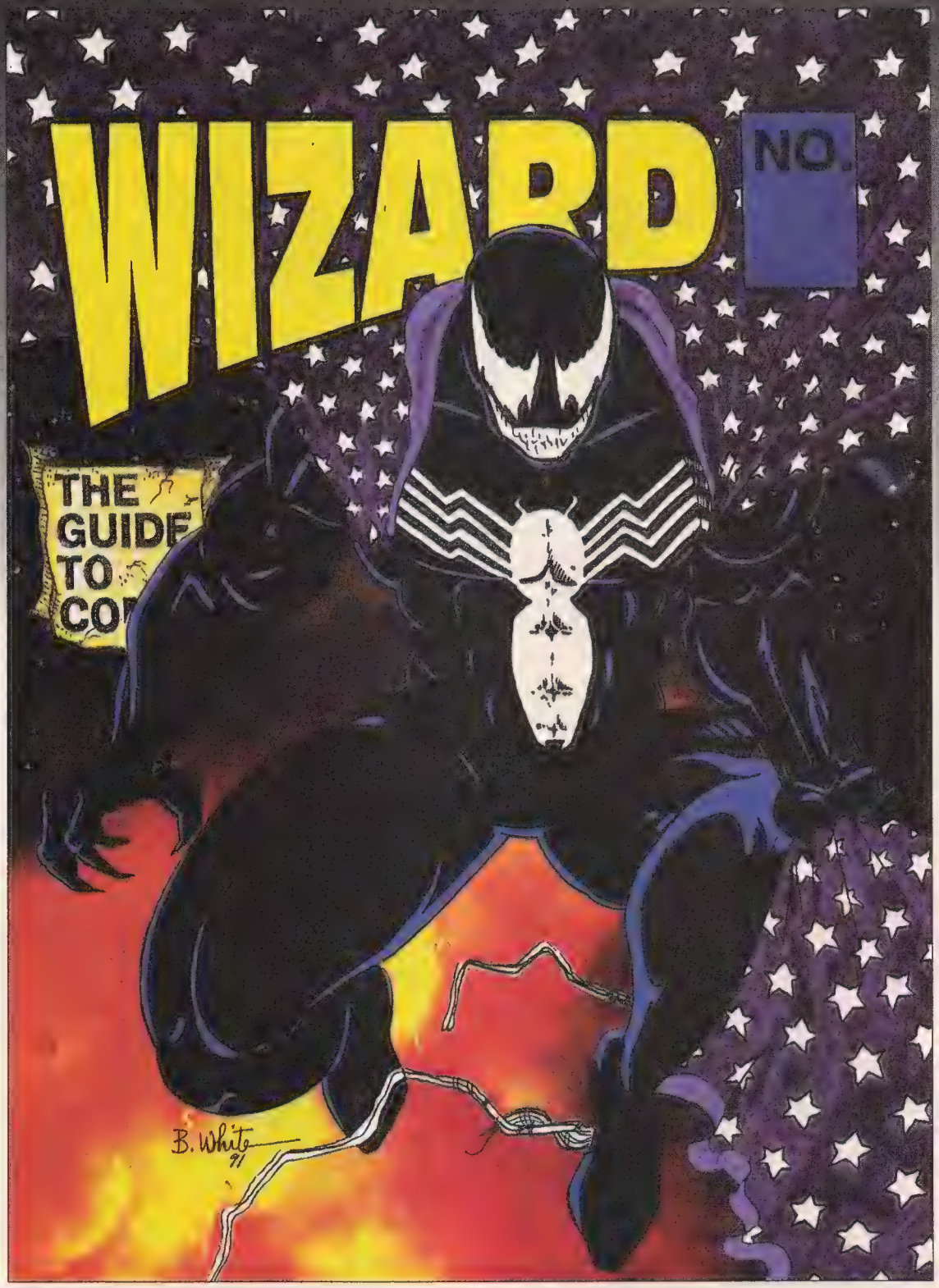
Billy Lyons
Bergenfield, NJ

Each month, the best of the artwork we've received will be shown on these pages. Submissions can be on any form of paper or cardboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, etc). Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork - mail them flat to avoid damage. All submissions are non-returnable. Send yours today!

Presented here are some of the finest pieces of fan artwork we have ever seen. All you need to see your work on these pages is send your artwork with your name, address, telephone number and age to:

Amazing Artists
Wizard Press
P.O. Box 434
Nanuet, NY 10952-0434

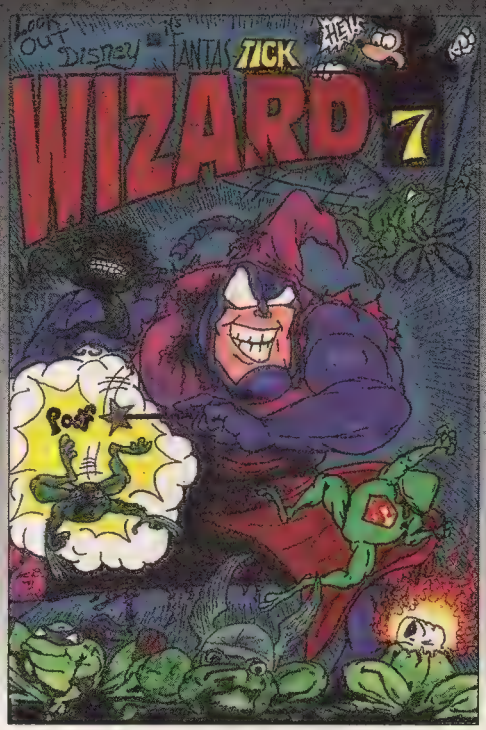
Jennifer Postma
Carleton Place, Ontario, Canada



Bryan White
Smyrna, GA

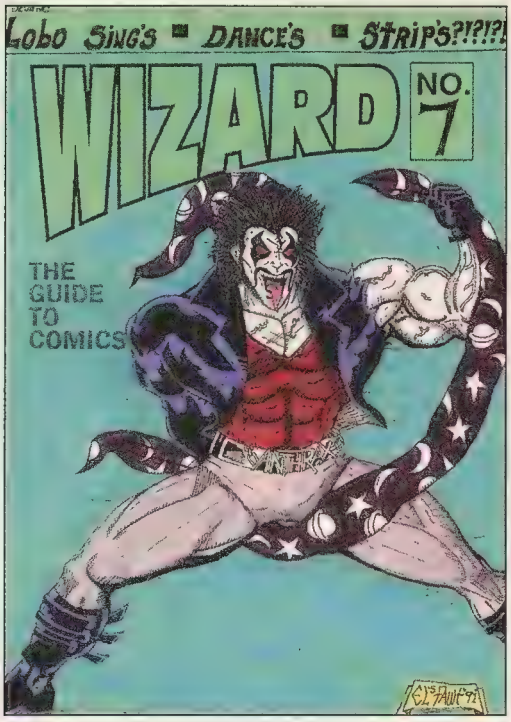
Every month's winner has their artwork, along with thier name and telephone number delivered to Valiant Comics where they will look over the work. They'll contact you if they think they can use your talent (how cool is that?). Congratulations, Bryan!

Aaron Cline
Watson, IL



Ken Berube
Tyngsboro, MA

Glenn Rane
McKinleyville, CA



Eric Lanoue
Tyngsboro, MA

Ernesto Cruz
Bayamon, Puerto Rico

Daniel Rodriquez
Fort Worth, TX

HOT NEWS

Taking the cover art contest one step further, we at Wizard want to see your very own super-hero creations! So, on a 8" x 11 1/4" (or smaller) sheet, send us your own hero, villain or team creation along with their vital statistics (which cannot exceed 200 words-***see example below***). Every month, we will run the winners right here in the pages of Wizard! Each month a winner will be picked from the published entries and sent to Valiant comics, and who knows what might happen?

With the entries, send us your name, address, telephone number and age. Entries may be colored or black & white. All entries non returnable. Send to:

My Kind Of Hero
Wizard Press
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Nanuet, NY 10954-0434

POOF THE WIZARD

Secret Identity: Gareb Snacrus
Current Occupation: Insomniac
Citizenship: United States
Legal Status: We're looking into it
Marital Status: Ha!
Base of Operations: Wizard HQ
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 145 lbs.
Eye Color: Blue
Hair Color: Brown
Powers: Gareb has the power to work days on end without any sleep, hit his employees in the head with rubber bands with amazing accuracy, and refers to himself as "The Big Cheese" without smiling. Whether this is the result of special governmental training or if he was born with these powers remains unknown. If he is indeed a mutant, then Marvel probably owns the rights to him and just talking about him is a copyright infringement.
Origin: C'mon, you learned this stuff in health class. He was born, went to school, wanted to read Wizard: The Guide To Comics, couldn't find an issue, so he made one. End of story.

WIZARD Contest

Grand Prize:

One autographed set of Amazing Spider-Man #346 and #347 autographed by Erik Larsen with a Wizard Seal of Authenticity.

First Prizes (2):

A set of *Amazing Spider-Man* #334-339, featuring the Return Of The Sinister Six.

Second Prizes (5):

A set of *Darkhawk* #13 and #14, featuring Venom.

Third Prizes (10):

A limited edition San Diego Comic Con version of *Wizard* #1.

Congratulations

to the winners of the January Fantastic Four contest:

Grand Prize:
Jon Bennett - Syosset, NY
First Prize:
Nick Grilli - Auburn, ME
Tom Luggiero - Westwood, NJ
Second Prize:
Josh Casson - Rockville Cntr, NY
Michael Kibbons - Dyersburg, TN
Mike Lanzalotti - Williamstown, NJ
Tom Malinowski - Bloomingdale, IL
Steve Martin - Flagstaff, AZ

№ 9

1. Valiant's Robot Fighter:
2. Warren Worthington III:
3. Bruce...
4. Tony Stark:
5. Leader of X-Force:
6. He's on our cover!
7. Batman, the World's Greatest...
8. Warlock and The Infinity...
9. ...and Iron Fist:

Enter Now To Win!

Official 1992 WIZARD Contest #9 Entry Form

YES, enter me in the 1992 Wizard "Amazing Code" contest for a chance to win an autographed set of *Amazing Spider-Man #346 & 347* by Erik Larsen.

Name

Phone #

Home Address

City State Zip

Store Name

Address

Amazing Code:

Wizard Clue: when Venom gets hungry

Contest Rules

Answer the questions in the boxes supplied. In each answer you will find a circled letter. After you have completed all the questions, the circled letters from the answers, when unscrambled, will form the Contest Code Word. Write this word on the official or a copy of the official entry form supplied below.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and Venom.
Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name of the store where you purchase your comics, and the Amazing Code on an "Official Entry Form" or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry individually to "Amazing Code," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof.
All entries must be postmarked by May 24, 1992 and received at contest headquarters by May 25, 1992. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries.
Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on May 26, 1992 by Wizard Press. One (1) grand prize- set of Erik Larsen autographed *Amazing Spider-Man #346* and *#347*. Two (2) first prizes- set of *Amazing Spider-Man #334-#339*. Five (5) second prizes- one set of *Darkhawk #13* and *#14*. Ten (10) third prizes- one copy of the Limited Edition San Diego Comic Con version of *Wizard #1*.

For a list of winners, which will be available after July 1, 1992, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Amazing Contest Winners," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648.

Send To:
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Toying Around

With Brian Cunningham

To tell you the truth, I wasn't going to write about the topic of this month's column. I didn't want to, despite the urging of my editor. Then I opened three letters in a row that suggested I do a column on "*Why aren't there more female action figures*?" Well, here it is.

My answer, quite frankly, is, "I don't know." I suspect that it might have to do with the fact that whenever I go to a toy store, Storm and Wonder Woman are the only figures left on the shelves; and they're in bulk.

Also (and this, by no means, is meant to demean girls), boys who play with superhero figures probably outnumber girls ten to one (and that's my own ballpark estimate). It's small boys and girls that the toy companies aim for, so it's fair to say that for every ten "guy" figures, there is one "gal" figure. It's unfortunate, but I guess that's what the market demands.

Many collectors wrote to me saying, "...but I *know* (name of female character) would sell!" Judging from Storm and Wonder Woman, no, they won't. Also, judging from my contest results, no, again. Not one female character made the Top 10 or the Top 50. Rogue and Psylocke tried with a measly eight votes; not one of the voters was female.

From a personal standpoint (psychologists could have a field day with this one), female figures were the first to die in my little fantasies. They were good for that one smooch with Han Solo or Batman, and then they bought it. Wonder Woman, Princess Leia, Batgirl - you name 'em and they died in the most interesting ways. Remember the small Mego playset with the exploding bridge? Heh heh heh heh heh....

removeable
WHAT ?!?!

Getting back to the point, I could be completely wrong about this matter, but I hope I'm at least close. I would like to see more "babes" on my shelf, as would many other collectors. Perhaps, many boys out there would like to kill off more than just Storm and Wonder Woman. Who knows?

Just as an aside, one reader wrote to me requesting Psylocke with removable clothing. Now there's a figure that would sell! Hubba Hubba!

Speak Of The Devil Dept. - Well, the results are in! I guess I really wasn't too surprised at the results.

1. Ghost Rider
2. Cable
3. Fantastic Four
4. Darkhawk
5. Lobo
6. Thanos
7. Sabretooth
8. Gambit
9. Deathstroke the Terminator, Galactus, Shatterstar (tie)
10. Deathlok, new Robin (tie)
Honorable Mention: Adam Warlock, Beast, Nova, Havok

Howzabout that?! Believe it or not, the FF and Nova got such a strong following in the last week of voting, they made the list! I'm happy, because I'd love to see them exist in figure form. Man, I'm sure glad this contest is over... What? You want *another contest*? Well... okay.

Here's the deal - last issue, I spoke about making your own figures, right? So do it! Make your own figure, then take a clear, color photograph (with good lighting) of an *individual figure*, and send it to me. Winners get the photo printed with their name in big lights. You like? Good.

Brian answers reader mail on page 65 - right after he reviews the '92 toy figures!

The 1992 Toy Fair

Have I got a surprise for you. Actually, I suppose the pictures give it away already. No matter, though. Pictures are worth a thousand words and I'm gonna give you just that as I introduce you to...THE NEW TOYS OF 1992. But first a story.

On February 15 1992, New York City hosted its annual American International Toy Fair fo rthe press. On Fevruary 14, I found out I was even going to this gala event. I was kind of surprised to be going, but I guess I fit the bill of "press."

When we arrived at the Toy Center, my assistant Dean and I kinda got lost. Asking typical tourist questions, we discovered Toy Biz was on the tenth floor.

Upon walking up two flights of stairs, we both discovered we were horribly out of shape and decided to take the elevator.

Two minutes later, we were on the tenth floor. We were ready to embark into new waters, new thresholds, new TOYS...but first, we had to figure out whether to take a left or a right into the long hallway. After deliberation of "eeny-meeny-miney," we took the right.

And there it was- "Toy Biz Inc." We were greeted with warm smiles and a little tour of their showroom. I introduced myself and acted like I was important. I gave them my business card and a copy of Wizard and I-

-HOLY COW! I was surrounded by new TOYS! I couldn't believe it! Here I was, an ordinary Joe, and I was one of the first to see these figures! And these figures are amazing (as you can see)!

Toy Biz is lauching thirty two new figures in '92. Twenty are X-Men related and ten are from the rest of the Marvel Universe. Interestingly enough, three of the figures are different versions of Wolverine, probably given the immense popularity of the character. There's a Wolverine in his original uniform, in his standard X-Men uniform (seen in Uncanny X-Men #275) and in his Weapon X birthday suit.

Also, there's Forge, who comes with a transparent bioinc leg, some weapons, and a "quick draw" mechanism. Iceman comes transparent, but when put in the freezer, blue icicles form on him. He also comes with an ice-slide. The ever-popular Gambit

comes with his trademark jacket and lance. He has a "tension powered kick," to boot. Banshee has fully extendable wings and his sonic scream comes out of his chest.

The X-Men's formidable foes are also represented in this batch. Sabretooth has luminous eyes and fangs along with a resetable chest panel revealing Wolverine's claw slashes. Claw weapons are also included. The enigmatic Mr. Sinister comes with light-up eyes and chest, as well as a sweeping cape. Then there's the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants' Sauron, which features posable wings, opening jaws, a swinging waist mechanism, and a club weapon. Lastly, there's a new Magneto with a sparking chest and a gun(?).

Toy Biz also debuts their X-Force line in '92. The super-hot Cable figure comes with a glow-in-the-dark eye, a karate-chopping right arm, and (of course) a big mama of a gun. Then there's the other-dimensional Shatterstar who has his twin-bladed swords with a recoil waist action. Warpath comes with a twisting waist, rapid punch combinations and shoulder-mounted bazooka. X-Force's questionable allies included G.W. Bridge and Kane. Bridge comes with a real noise machine gun, whereas Kane comes with yet another big gun. Kane's left hand can detatch from his body (via a string) and when his legs are squeezed, the had flies back into position.

X-Force's foes include Deadpool, Stryfe, Gideon and Forearm. The assassin, Deadpool, comes with a dagger and twin swords which attach to his back. Stryfe, the mysterious leader of the Mutant Liberation Front, comes with a big mace and a snap-back helmet to reveal his true identity. The manipulative Gideon comes with an attache case which hides a samurai sword. And Forearm comes with...surprise...four arms with punching action and nunchakus.

Toy Biz is also extending their popular "Marvel Super-Heroes" line with the addition of the entire Fantastic Four, Annihilus, Deathlok, a new Venom, Silver Surfer, and two Spider-Mans.

The Fantastic Four look sharp. Mr. Fantastic has Apocolypse-like stretching ability. The Thing comes with a Yancy Street sign which he can split in two. The Human Torch hurls fireballs which attach to his back. And the Invisible Woman, when placed in water, turns white to give the aura of invisibility. The foursome's foe, Annihilus, comes with flapping wings and a cosmic rod.

The new Silver Surfer looks more regal than ever with his ultra-reflective silver skin. The new Venom comes with goulishly evil tongue action. His living

Well, I asked for mail and, boy, did I get it! Whoa! I toldja "Toying Around" would be going places in '92! Before I go on, though, there's the "name of the column" business. I'm sure you all smell another contest in this, as do I. So do it! The winner receives a one-year free subscription to *Wizard*. For this, I hope you can think of something better than "The Toy Chest" or whatever. Here we go...

Dear Brian Cunningham,

Your column is the best. I read it first before any of the other stuff.

I was just writing in response to your plea for letters. By the way, I'm 15 and I experience the same agony in buying toys as you do.

I would probably have to put Cyborg or Shazam on the Top 10 list but I don't have them! Please help me, I need them desperately! If there is any way that you know of that I could get them, at a reasonable price, please respond to my letter. And please don't tell me to go to a convention, because I've tried and can't afford them. I would also like to get my hands on the Secret Wars Iceman and Magneto. Please help me. I need Cyborg!!

Well, I gotta go eat, please find a way for me to get Cyborg, and please respond.

Michael Edgell
Glendale, AZ

Y'know, Michael, many readers ask me if I can help them find a certain figure for a good price. Unfortunately, I can only tell you what everyone else tells you. Cyborg is expensive for a reason - he's extremely rare, which explains why you can't find him. I can, however, recommend these dealers:

Heroes Unlimited
P.O. Box 453
Oradell, NJ 07649
(201) 385-1557

Splash Page Comics & Toys
1007 E. Patterson
Kirksville, MO 63501
(816) 665-7623

Toymasters
2040 Pacific Cst Hwy,Ste Inn
Lomita, CA 90717
(213) 530-5513

Dear Brian,

Just a few words of thanks. From time to time I drop in to a hobby shop/toy store in Chinatown, NY. The guys at Wah Kue and Co. are really up on all this stuff you write about. I've grown to know them because I sculpt masters for toy companies. When I dropped by last night they said, "Hey, your Venom is in this magazine." Your effort was very kind and I'd like you to know that it means a great deal to me.

To give you some background history on this figure: Last year at this time I was rushing to complete some of the smaller action figures for Toy Biz. Thor, Iron Man, Green Goblin and Mr. Fantastic (which was postponed) were sculpted in seven and a half weeks. Believe me, this is too fast to do a good job. I've done G.I. Joes for seven years and Hasbro allows five weeks per figure. After these four figures were completed, Toy Biz requested a Venom figure. A few weeks later, I brought the smaller Venom figure into Toy Biz. Lou Swartz and Rob Luff were in a meeting room with two of the large scale figures on the table (Hulk and Spider-Man). I was not impressed with the sculpting but I thought the size would be great for Venom. I told them what I thought, "If I sculpt Venom in this scale, it will out-sell any of these figures." Rob looked at the small Venom and said, "He's right."

They were also in need of an anti-hero figure as they had the Hulk, Spider-Man and the Punisher. Three weeks later they had the master. I'm happy to say it was a hit at toy fairs. Unhappily, the line died in the the toy stores and will be dropped. Venom was the only one that sold. I was P.O.'ed. I really was pushing for a large-scale Deathlok! That's show biz.

Bill Merklein
Flushing, NY

To say that I'm extremely flattered would be an understatement, Bill. Your letter alone makes my job worth it. Your figure designs are truly great (especially Iron Man and Venom), and have made nearly everyone's personal "Top 10 of All-Time" list. All I can say is thanks for writing, and you're a credit to your trade.

Dear Brian,

From the first time I read your column (which is the main I buy Wizard) I realized I was not alone in my passion for toy collecting. I guess you can relate to my grief when I recall all the great toys I had as a youngster, which met their fates in a variety of destructive ways. I can still see my original G.I. Joe laying at the bottom of a local quarry whenever I shut my eyes at night. And as for my old batmobile, the less said the better. But I've got to tell you, Brian, columns like yours also brings me down a little. Do you know that quite a lot of the toy lines you write about don't even come down here to Australia? For instance, we never saw the Secret Wars series at all and from the various pictures I've seen of them I feel like crying when I think about it! I might add that we have to wait forever for the ones that do make it here. At the time of this writing, the Toy Biz X-Men figures have just been released and I know you guys had them years ago. Who knows when the second Dark Knight line-up will arrive.

Another problem we have is the prices. The X-Men figures I just mentioned go for $20 each while the first Dark Knight collection averaged about $15 a shot. Pretty grim, eh? Can you imagine what I'd be paying for the large Venom doll? Yeesh!

But all this sadness aside, I'd like to say keep up the good work, as long as you write for Wizard I'll keep buying It. By the way, I hope to be in America for a holiday in April and you can bet I'll be doing some serious toy hunting.

Bill Webb
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Wow, Bill! You're my first transcontinental letter writer! Your plight, however, saddens me. I hope you find everything while here in the States. Thanks for writing!

WIZARD NEWS

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE WORLD OF COMICS

Second Ghost Rider Comic To Begin In June

Spirits of Vengeance Will Co-Star Johnny Blaze

Due to the huge success of the *Ghost Rider* title, Marvel Comics will release *Spirits of Vengeance* #1 in June, pencilled by Adam Kubert and written by *Ghost Rider* writer Howard Mackie.

Spirits of Vengeance features the return of Johnny Blaze as the leader/mentor to the new Ghost Rider. Beginning the series will be the introduction to the Rise of The Midnight Sons crossover story which will touch all of Marvel's new horror titles released this summer.

After his guest appearances in *Ghost Rider*, Johnny Blaze had returned to the Quentin Carnival, which he owns and operates. One such employee is Clara, a powerful psychic who reveals that Blaze is a focal point for magic (which explains how his rifle absorbed the Ghost Rider's hellfire). Unfortunately, he is a focal point for evil magic as well, evil like the extra-dimensional demons who want to conquer our world. When his son is kidnapped, Blaze is forced into the role of super-hero once again, with the Ghost Rider as his partner.

The kidnapping leads into the start of the Rise Of The Midnight Sons in *Spirits of Vengeance* #2 on sale in July.

Alpha Flight #106 Receives National Attention

As everyone already knows, *Alpha Flight* #106 tells not only one of several AIDS stories that Marvel has placed in their comics lately, but in its pages is the first time a well-known super-hero, Northstar, has acknowledged homosexuality.

The resulting media coverage on network television, radio, and print has caused a rush for the issue in comic stores. Almost impossible to find, *Alpha Flight* #106 goes for around $20.00 nowadays. Marvel has even released a second print.

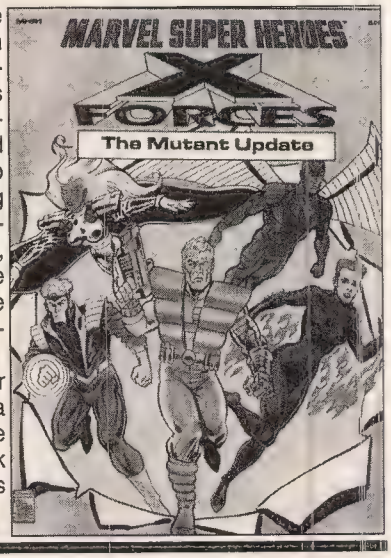
Rumor has it that John Byrne, writer/artist of *Alpha Flight* when the series premiered, intended for Northstar to not only be homosexual, but to die of AIDS. Editors at the time forbade the story, but apparently, times have changed.

If the price jump is a result of the media craze, and will dissappear as the craze dies down is a question no one can answer yet.

TSR Releases Mutant Update

X-Men Featured in Role Playing Game

On sale in May, TSR has created "X-Forces: The Mutant Update" for it's Marvel Super Heroes Role Playing Game.



The update includes information on rules and statistics for the members of the X-Men, X-Force, X-Factor, and Excalibur. Also included is a catalog of mutant equipment, adventures, and layouts for the headquarters of the X-Men and Magneto.

In production for later this year is a Marvel Universe Gamers Handbook and the Avengers Archives.

DC Begins Green Lantern Push

Two New Titles Begin in April

The Green Lantern name will now be found on three titles, with the release of *Green Lantern: Mosaic* and *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly*. As part of a large promotional push for the Green Lanterns, DC is giving away glow-in-the-dark power rings to its retail customers.

Green Lantern: Mosaic features John Stewart as guardian of the Mosaic world, from the Mosaic storyline in *Green Lantern* #14-17. This new $1.25 book will be written by JLE writer Gerard Jones.

Green Lantern Corps Quarterly is a new double-sized title featuring the exploits of the members of the new Corps. DC plans to use this title to introduce new Green Lanterns as the Corps expands. Issue #1 features stories of Alan Scott, G'Nort, and a new Lantern and will be released the week of April 21st.

Marvel Gears Up For Line Of Future Comics

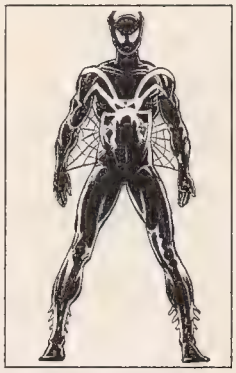
New Line Begins This Fall

The success of such "future" titles like *Guardians of The Galaxy*, *X-Men: Days of Future Past* and the "Once and Future Thor" storyline have prompted Marvel Comics to release an entire line of future comics based on current characters. The 2093 line will not be based on any future previously seen in the Marvel Universe, and will stand on its own. To be released this fall, this new series will start with four titles.

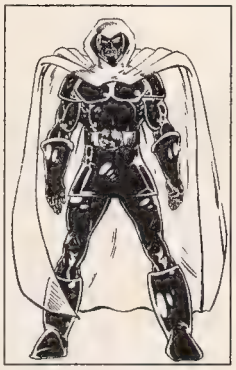
The Marvel Universe of 2093 will be dramatically different from the Marvel Universe of today. What passes for super-powers in our world is nothing extraordinary in the future, so super-heroes have to be that much more powerful.

The first future title is *Spider-Man 2093*, to be released this September. This book will be the focal point for the Marvel 2093 line. Released as a part of Spidey's 30th anniversary year, Marvel's knack for marketing and promotional campaigns will make this book a hot newcomer. This new character may not have Todd McFarlane to boost its sales, but Marvel promises to make him as interesting as the original wall-crawler, with a full century of changes.

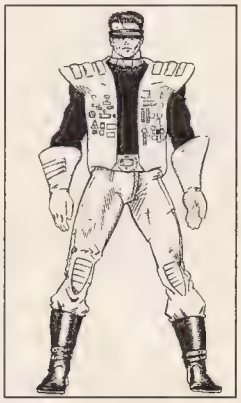
Dr. Doom has constantly been a hot villain over the years, and now has the distinction of being the first villain to get his own monthly title with *Doom 2093*. This new way of telling the story from the bad guy's point of view will probably have a major impact on the world of comics. If the Fantastic Four of 2093 exists is a question Marvel has not yet answered. *Doom 2093* #1 ships in October.



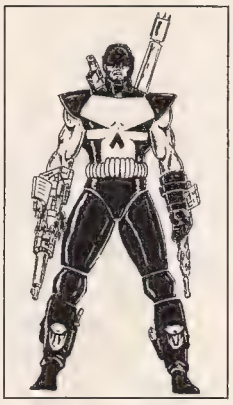
Spider-Man 2093



Doom 2093



Ravage 2093



Punisher 2093

The one character specifically designed for the 2093 line is Ravage. Stan Lee returns to writing a monthly title with *Ravage 2093*, a character which he created. More than any others, Ravage will investigate the future world in depth, and will be released this November.

Like the Punishers in the 30th century, the Punisher of 2093 is heavily armored. Looking more like Iron Man than the Punisher of today, *Punisher 2093* must have the highest of the high-tech weapons to combat crime of the future. The last of the four introductory 2093 titles, *Punisher 2093* #1 will ship in December.

Except for Stan Lee on Ravage, the creative teams for each title have yet to be announced.

John Byrne's Superman Movie

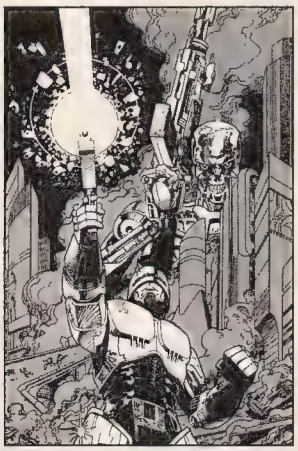
Rumor has it that Warner Brothers is planning a new Superman movie, but it won't be called Superman V. The film will be a fresh start for the man of steel, building on John Byrne's version of Superman, rather than the older, ridiculously powerful super-hero seen in the previous films. It isn't known if Christopher Reeve would do the film.

Marvel's Beverly Hills 90210

In the planning stages is Marvel's Beverly Hills 90210 monthly comic. Look for photo covers and special features tying the book closely to the series.

Dark Horse Reveals 1992 Projects

Terminator vs Robocop and Aliens vs Predator



1992 will be a very stong year for Dark Horse, with major new movie-related projects coming out over the next few months.

A Terminator/Robocop crossover, written by Frank Miller (writer of Robocop 2) and drawn by Walt Simonson will premiere this Spring, to be followed by other Robocop material.

Even more exciting is the return of the Aliens vs Predator theme, in the form of a twelve issue miniseries. The new title will be written by ex-X-Men writer Chris Claremont. Dark Horse is also publishing the two-part movie adaption of Aliens III this June.

Other movie-related titles include more books related to Indiana Jones, including the continuing *Young Indiana Jones* title. Also due out are the movie adaption of Evil Dead 3: Armies of Darkness, a James Bond series (by *Legend of the Dark Knight* team Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy), and *The Return of Godzilla* (drawn by Art Adams).

Dark Horse has also announced a May release of *Marshal Law: Super Babylon*. This will be the first Marshal Law story by Dark Horse, and reportedly not the last. Returning this summer will be a new *Grendel* one shot by Matt Wagner, and a new *Mask* series.

Of course, Dark Horse will continue all of their popular series now in production, like *John Byrne's Next Men*, *Dark Horse Presents*, *2112* (yearly), and *Venus Wars* (which will start over as *Venus Wars II*).

Killer Penguins

Rumor has it that Batman Returns will feature killer penguins. If these are the killer penguins that threatened the Justice League Antarctica remains to be seen (for more info see page 42).

Lawnmower Man

Innovation's adaption

Premiering early April will be New Line Cinema's adaption of Stephen King's short story Lawnmower Man based on the over use of Virtual Reality, the new technology that provides the user with an imaginary reality.

At the same time, Innovation will release its 84 page, full color graphic novel, The Lawnmower Man, an adaption of the film.

Paramount's New Star Trek

Even though *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* was written as the last voyage of Captain Kirk, Paramount is producing the future of Star Trek in television and film.

Now being sold to local television stations around the country is *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. This serieswill take place 100 years after the Next Generation (the same way TNG takes place 78 years after the original show), and will feature the crew of a space station that sits near a wormhole, instead of following the crew of a starship. No actors have been announced. The new show, scheduled for a January, 1993 premiere, will continue the Star Trek theme even after *Star Trek: The Next Generation* ends its run after the sixth or seventh season.

Rumors have persisted for quite a while that when *Star Trek: The Next Generation* ended as a television show, that Paramount would begin making Next Generation movies starting with *Star Trek VII*. Now it seems that Paramount is not going to wait that long. Production has already begun on a Next Generation movie. No word on the plot has yet been released.

Strange Sports Stories Returns With Adventure

Shipping in May 1992, *Strange Sports Stories* #1 will hit the stands in time for the start of the '92 baseball season. The new title is said to be a cross between the *Wide World of Sports* and the *Twilight Zone*.

Charles Marshall (*Planet of the Apes*) will be the writer on the book. Charles approached Adventure Comics publisher Dave Olbrich with the idea of a new *Strange Sports* title one year ago, and the book has been in the works ever since.

DC Comics originated the *Strange Sports* name in the 1960s, but had stopped using it by the 1970s. Since no one has used the name in over a decade, Olbrich agreed that the time was right for the series' return. With Mitch Byrd and Bruce McCorkindale supplying the art, the new *Strange Sports* stories will be totally different from the DC stories of old.

Anti-Sun Comic Protection Now Available

DJS Adventures has announced its new product, Showcase Sealer, a comic book picture frame with ultraviolet protection.

For years, cover fading due to exposure to sunlight was a leading source of damage to comics. Inventor David Schur has ended that. For serious collectors, the new frame screens out all ultraviolet radiation and most visible light in the violet region.

Also providing acid protection, the Showcase Sealer replaces the need for bags and backboards. Available in three sizes (Golden Age, Silver Age and Modern), and guaranteed by the manufacturer for life, the Showcase sealer may be the next hot thing in comic protection. For more information, ask your local retailer.

Harvey Comics Releases Nine New Titles

Harvey Comics is releasing several new titles during the months of May. To complement its already large line of childrens comics with titles such as *Tom & Jerry*, *Casper*, *Woody Woodpecker* and *Richie Rich*, Harvey has acquired the rights to a large number of new characters, many of them from classic cartoon shows.

New titles include *Scooby Doo*, *Yogi Bear*, *The Jetsons*, *Hanna Barbara Comics & Stories*, *The Flintstones*, *Beetle Bailey*, *Alvin & The Chipmunks*, and *Beetlejuice*.

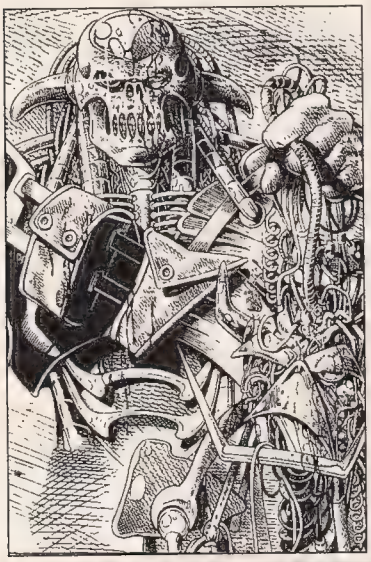
With the release of these new books, the number of comics in the Harvey line has almost doubled.

Marvel UK in US

1992 will see the launch of the Marvel UK Universe, which will affect Marvel's American and British titles.

Genesis 1992 is the name for the project which will introduce six new characters to the British and American markets. The first, the second Death's Head, was introduced in Death's Head II #1. This issue was a huge success and sold 195,000 copies in the direct market alone.

In Death's Head II's wake, Hell's Angel, Motormouth, Warheads, Pendragon II and Digitek are being released to collectively form the Marvel UK subuniverse.



Mirage Releases Monster Baseball Cards

Available in May is a special limited edition set of Gahan Wilson Monster Baseball Trading Cards. This 10-card set will be limited to a 20,000 card print run.

Grahan Wilson is best known for his humor artowork in Playboy, The New Yorker, and National Lampoon. Mirage Press has taken his creativity and placed his creativity on this one time series of trading cards.

Designed to be a collectible, the cards are printed on quality paper stock and contained within a reusable pack. Each card shows a ghoulish baseball character, his statistics and his biography (including info on how many opponents have been mutilated or eaten).

Eternity Comics Declares May "Robotech Month"

Eternity Comics, owner of the comic book rights to the entire Robotech universe, will debut two new Robotech projects in May: *Robotech: Invid War* and *Robotech II: The Sentinels Swimsuit Spectacular.*

Robotech: Invid War is a four-issue mini series by Tim Eldred and Bill Spangler that tells the story of the early days of the Invid invasion of Earth. Colonel Jonathan Wolf has just returned from the Robotech Expeditionary Force just in time to face the threat of the incoming aliens.

What may surprise many Robotech fans is the *Robotech II:The Sentinels Swimsuit Spectacular.* This 32 page, full color pin up book (which is featured without advertising) features the main characters of the Sentinels storyline, male and female.

Marvel Takes Liefeld Off Cable and X-Force

Rob Liefeld, the popular artist/writer/creator of X-Force was let go by Marvel Comics recently.

He will continue to do X-Force through issue #11, but only as plotter and cover artist. The four-issue Cable mini-series, which was announced as a Rob Liefeld project, will now need a new creative team (which has not yet been announced).

Reasons for the action by Marvel were not given, but might be related to Rob's new projects at Image Press. Before leaving X-Force, Liefeld has said that he will reveal Cable's true origins, and dispel any false rumors about the mutant.

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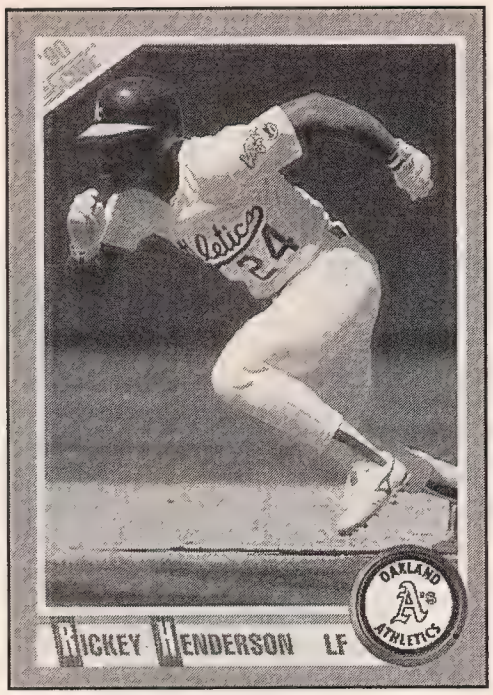

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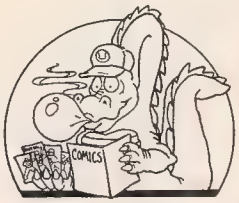

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Cover SHOTS

How well do you remember your covers? Below, you will find six pieces from covers published over the last year. Can you tell what covers they are from? Answers on page 176.

A

B

C

D

E

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The Wizard's Crystal Ball

By Greg Buls

In April, the crystal ball keeps coming back to one book: *Archer and Armstrong #0. A&A* is the newest title from Valiant Comics. This is the origin book in the series about a young man with extraordinary powers and the ageless strong man whom he befriends.

Archer is the young son of a corrupt evangelist couple. He tries desperately to win the approval of his parents, until he discovers that they are involved in some *really* bad things. They try to kill him when he learns the truth, and he narrowly escapes with his life. Archer goes away for a number of years, travelling around the world, learning what he can about survival in a ruthless world. He fine tunes an innate power he has to defy probability; at certain times Archer can make impossible basketball shots, flip a coin and make it land on its edge, or perform other incredible feats of chance and direction.

After travelling for several years, Archer returns to the U.S., where he meets Armstrong. Armstrong appears to be a wino, but tells Archer incredible stories about having lived forever and having the strength of a hundred men. Before long, the action starts and we find out more about both of them. The book is being touted as the superhero buddy book of the decade. It promises to be entertaining, as two contrasting personalities are forced to tolerate and eventually rely upon one another. "Together they are utterly unstoppable...and utterly miserable."

The story is written by Jim Shooter, who has a knack for making things believable; his characters talk and act like real people. When they are in the midst of a life and death battle they are busy fighting, not making wisecracks. Because they seem so real, readers care more about what happens to the characters.

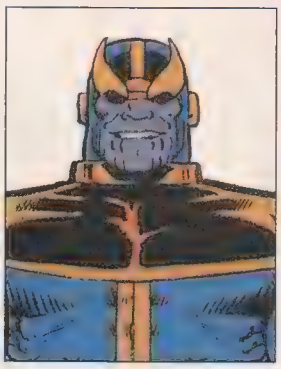
The art is provided by the incomparable Barry Windsor-Smith, one of the all-time great comic book illustrators. As usual, the book is colored with Valiant's unique coloring process which provides very vivid and lively colors.

If the quality of other Valiant titles is any indication, readers have something to look forward to here. A lot of collectors see the genesis of Marvel Comics in 1961 when they look at Valiant Comics in 1992. The books are extremely enjoyable, and are also very collectible. A lot of the back issues are extremely hard to find and now command premium prices. The vast majority of Valiant books printed to date have had print runs under 50,000 copies. None have had a print run over 80,000 copies. This compares to over half a million copies of the average issue of *X-Men*. Think about this: there are *one hundred* times as many copies of *X-Men* 1 as there are copies of *Magnus #1* or *XO Manowar #1*! For every copy of Harbinger 1 printed, there were *two hundred* copies of *X-Men #1* printed! If and when these books really catch on, they will be very hard to find. Most of them have already filtered into collections, where they will probably stay for some time to come.

Archer and Armstrong #0 leads into the most ambitious crossover series ever attempted outside the hallowed halls of DC and Marvel, *Unity*. In the middle of April, Valiant will be shipping a book called *Unity #0*, a 16 page prelude comic to the *Unity* storyline, which starts in May. The crossover begins with *Eternal Warrior #1* and*Archer and Armstrong #1*. From there, it crosses over into all six of the other Valiant titles, lasting through May and June. The best part about it is that *Unity #0* is free! Valiant is giving the book away to comic stores all across the country. Talk to your local store about getting a copy. Remember, it's free! Meanwhile, you can get warmed up for *Unity* with *Archer and Armstrong #0*. It should be great, a terrific story with a lot of appeal to fans of all ages. In addition, the limited production of this and other Valiant comics makes them stand out as collectibles in a day and age when many "investment" comics are printed in huge quantities!

Once in a while, I can sneak into the Wizard's Laboratory and take a look into his crystal ball. Did you think I was the Wizard? No, I'm just an acolyte. Not quite an apprentice, but almost. As soon as the current apprentice is eaten by a dragon or something, it will be my turn by the Wizard's side. Until then, I must be satisfied with my monthly midnight visits to the Wizard's lab, where I gaze into the future through his crystal ball.

Collecting Comics In The 90s



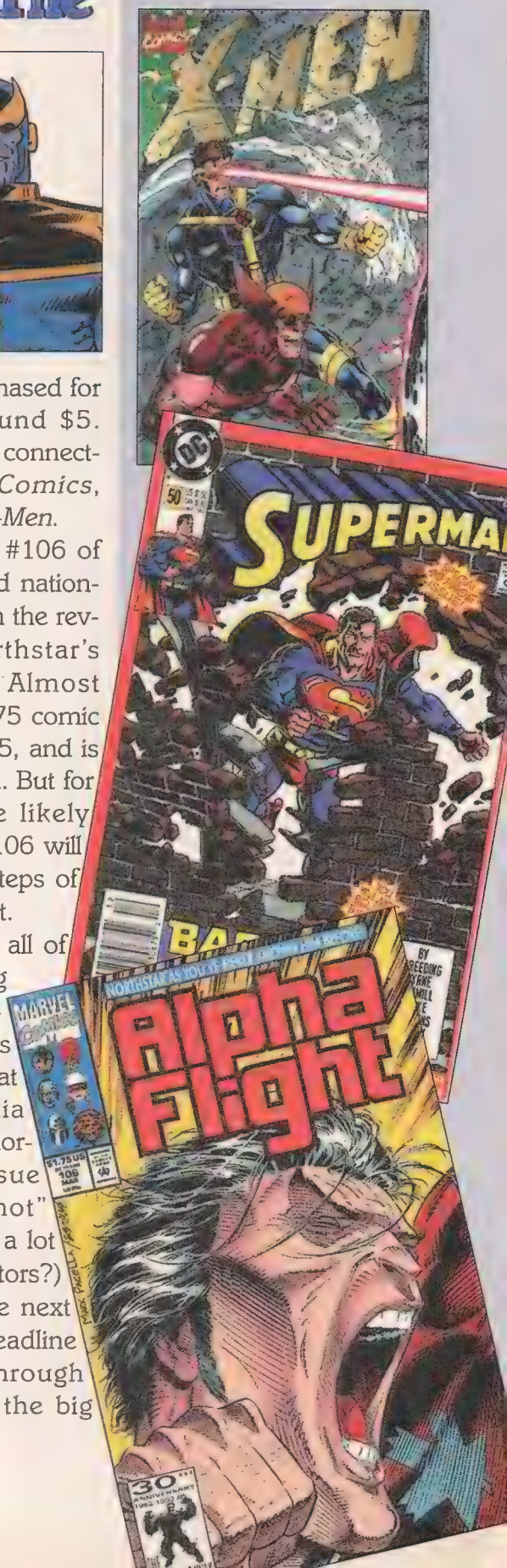
By Pat McCallum

Howdy, and welcome back to Wizard. First off, let me say hi to all the Wizard fans I've met while criss-crossing the country on the show circuit. I really do listen to your ideas and comments, and as you see by the changes in Wizard, we pay attention. So if you've got something to say, write us!!

Enough of that, and on to today's topic. *Batman* #457. *Superman* #50. *Action Comics* #662. *X-Men* #1. What do these and others have in common? Well, they're all media hyped books, and all were hot at one time, but have since died down considerably, and have fallen in price drastically. Remember *Superman* #50 (Clark & Lois's engagement)? When it first came out, you couldn't find a single copy anywhere, and if you could track one down, a price tag upwards of $15.00 might be attached. That same book now, after all the media hype is gone, can easily be purchased for somewhere around $5. Similar stories are connected to *Action Comics*, *Batman* and the *X-Men*.

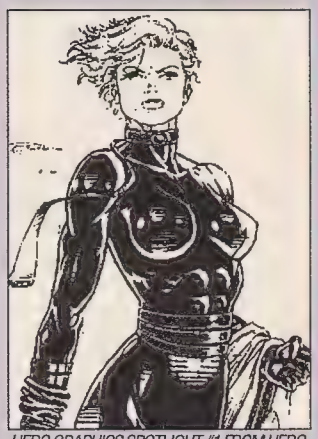
Recently, issue #106 of *Alpha Flight* gained nationwide attention with the revelation of Northstar's homosexuality. Almost overnight, the $1.75 comic jumped to $10-$15, and is a royal pain to find. But for how long? More likely than not, *Alpha* #106 will follow in the footsteps of Clark's engagement.

Now don't take all of this the wrong way. I'm not saying these comics are crap, it's just that when the media takes a hold of a normally "good" issue and creates a "hot" comic in its place, a lot of collectors (investors?) get burned. So the next time you see a headline comic, think it through before spending the big bucks.

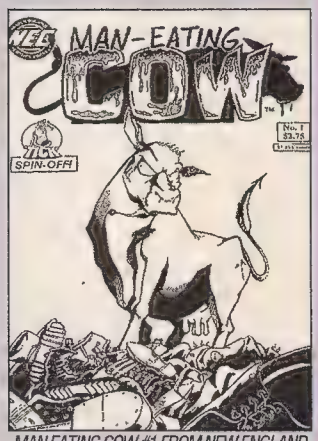


COPS: THE JOB #1 FROM MARVEL

GREEN LANTERN: MOSAIC #1 FROM DC COMICS



HERO GRAPHICS SPOTLIGHT #1 FROM HERO



MAN EATING COW #1 FROM NEW ENGLAND

THIS MONTH'S NUMBER ONES

NUMBER 1

Comic book collectors place a great deal of importance on the #1 issues; since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed. You have to choose your comics very carefully and wisely. #1 issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes very popular. Here we have compiled for you all the #1 issues shipping for April. Happy Hunting!

For The Wizard Comic Watchers

Black Condor #1 DC Comics
Black Hood Annual #1 Impact
Blitz #1 Night Wynd
Calibrations #1 Caliber
Cheque, Mate #1 Fantagraphics
Chronos, Inc #1 Brave
Comet Annual #1 Impact
Cops: The Job #1 Marvel
Dark Horse Presents: Aliens #1 Dark Horse
Dollman #1 Eternity
Epic #1 Marvel
Eyeball Kid #1 Dark Horse
Femforce Up Close #1 AC
Fly Annual #1 Impact
Green Lantern Corps Quarterly #1 DC Comics
Green Lantern: Mosaic #1 DC Comics
Hero Graphics Spotlight #1 Hero
Heroines Inc #1 Mockingbird
Hitomi & Her Girl Commandoes #1 Antarctic
Infinity War #1 Marvel
Jaguar Annual #1 Impact
Kimber Of The Feylons #1 Antarctic
Kiss #1 Personality
Madonna vs Marilyn #1 Personality
Man-Eating Cow #1 New England
Metaphisique #1 Eclipse
Motormouth #1 Marvel
Night Of The Living Deadline U.S.A. #1 Dark Horse
Nolan Ryan #1 Personality
Oz Squad Special Edition #1 Brave New Worlds
Paul The Samurai #1 New England
Punisher & Captain America: Blood & Glory #1 Marvel
Raggedy Man #1 Brave New Worlds
Revengers Special #1 Continuity
Rust #1 Adventure
Shriek Special: The Bridge #1 Fantaco
Silver Sable #1 Marvel
Super Shark Humanoids #1 Fish Tales
Superboy Special #1 DC Comics
T.M.N.T. Adventures Special #1 Archie
They Called Him Evil #1 Mockingbird
2000 A.D. Showcase #1 Fleetway/Quality
Wall Of Flesh & Other Horrors #1 AC Comics
Warheads #1 Marvel
Witness #1 Mister Planet
Zombie War #1 Fantaco/Tundra

TOP 100 MARCH-1992

Here's the list for March - the countdown of the top selling titles sold as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1 X-Men #8
2 Incredible Hulk #393
3 Uncanny X-Men #288
4 X-Men Annual #1
5 X-Force #10
6 Ghost Rider #25
7 Uncanny X-Men Annual #16
8 X-Force Annual #1
9 Lobo's Back #1
10 Spider-Man #22
11 X-Factor Annual #7
12 Wolverine #54
13 Amazing Spider-Man #362
14 X-Factor #78
15 Punisher War Zone #3
16 Nomad #1
17 Warlock & The Infinity Watch #4
18 Youngblood #2
19 Cage #2
20 Captain America #400
21 Punisher #63
22 Excalibur #50
23 Silver Surfer #65
24 Incredible Hulk Annual #18
25 New Warriors #23
26 Legends of the Dark Knight #30
27 Batman: Gotham Nights #3
28 Deathlok #11
29 Marvel Comics Presents #103
30 Marvel Comics Presents #102
31 Marvel Comics Presents #101
32 Batman #478
33 Terminator: Hunters & Killers #1
34 Aliens: Hive #2
35 Darkhawk #15
36 Next Men #2
37 Avengers #347
38 Batman #477
39 Web of Spider-Man #88
40 Spectacular Spider-Man #188
41 Punisher War Journal #42
42 Guardians of the Galaxy #24
43 Avengers West Coast #82
44 Thor #447
45 Detective Comics #644
46 Fantastic Four #364
47 Wonder Man #9
48 Daredevil #304
49 Namor #26
50 What If? #37
51 Iron Man #280
52 Quasar #34
53 Justice League Europe #37
54 Deathstroke, the Terminator #10
55 Armageddon, Inferno #2
56 Sleepwalker #12
57 Justice League Europe #38
58 Moon Knight #38
59 Sandman #37
60 Justice League America #62
61 Green Lantern #24
62 Dr. Strange #41
63 New Titans #86
64 Warlock #1
65 Incredible Hulk #1
66 Superman #67
67 Action Comics #677
68 Death's Head II #3
69 Superman, the Man of Steel #11
70 Crusaders #1
71 Adventures of Superman #490
72 Tarzan the Warrior #1
73 Showcase #4
74 Demon #23
75 Nam #68
76 Star Trek: The Next Generation #31
77 Alpha Flight #108
78 Flash #62
79 Star Trek #31
80 Aquaman #6
81 Showcase #22
82 Flash #63
83 Brave & The Bold #28
84 Detective Comics #225
85 Adventure Comics #247
86 Wonder Woman Special #1
87 Star Trek Annual #3
88 Ragman #8
89 Detective Comics #327
90 Action Comics #252
91 L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 #39
92 Legion of Super-Heroes #29
93 She-Hulk #39
94 Thing #2
95 Green Lantern/Green Arrow #76
96 Hard Boiled #3
97 Dark Shadows #1
98 X-Men Classic #71
99 Green Arrow #60
100 Green Arrow #61

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	**9**	**40**	**52**
DC Comics	**1**	**6**	**40**
Dark Horse	**-**	**3**	**5**
Malibu	**-**	**1**	**2**
Innovation	**-**	**-**	**1**

TOP TEN - MARCH 1991

1 Spider-Man #12
2 Infinity Gauntlet #1
3 Ghost Rider #15
4 Uncanny X-Men #278
5 Deathlok #1
6 Superman: The Man of Steel #1
7 Amazing Spider-Man #349
8 Marvel Comics Presents #81
9 Marvel Comics Presents #80
10 X-Factor #68

From The Wizard's Hat

PICKS

Here's a listing of the hottest books shipping in April!

Infinity War #1

Artist: Ron Lim
Writer: Jim Starlin
Shipping Date: April 28th
Cover Price: $2.50

It was the sales phenomenon of last summer. It crossed over into only a handfull of books, yet it shook the entire Marvel Universe. The saga of the Infinity Gauntlet was one of the most exciting series to ever grace comics, and it's back again this summer in the all new *Infinity War* limited series, the eagerly awaited sequel to *IG*. This time around, Magus (the evil Warlock) is replacing Earth's heroes with evil dopplegangers, all in a bid to recreate the Infinity Gauntlet. When news of this hits those who opposed the Gauntlet the first time around, they rally to defeat Magus with the help of an unexpected ally...Thanos! Yeah, some serious butt kickin' comin' your way!

Youngblood #3

Artist: Rob Liefeld
Writer: Hank Hanalz
Shipping Date: April
Cover Price: $2.50

Rob "X-Force" Liefeld concludes his three issue mini-series with a bang. The #1 selling independent of all time wraps up its run with a special glow in the dark cover. Chapel, the really big guy wiht the mondo big guns and white skull face paint adorns the cover, and...you guessed it...the face paint glows in the dark! Very cool stuff. Also this issue: Two more of the limited edition Youngblood trading cards free inside! Expect more Youngblood related titles later this year, including *Brigade*, another super-hero team by Rob "The Man" Liefeld.

Silver Sable #1

Artist: Jeff Butler
Writer: Gregory Wright
Shipping Date: April 14th
Cover Price: $2.00

Hey, most excellent! That hot babe from the pages of *Amazing Spider-Man* now has her own monthly series, but she's not alone. She leads a "team for hire," willing to take on any assignment as long as the price is right. The team includes such popular Marvel characters as Paladin, Torpedo, Sandman and the Absorbing Man. In the premiere of this series, Silver Sable's niece is taken hostage, and it's up to Sable, her Wildpack and special guest star, the Amazing Spider-Man, to rescue her! All this plus a really cool silver foil stamped cover to help kick off the series (can't get enough of those foil stamped covers).

X-Men #9

Artist: Jim Lee
Writer: John Byrne
Shipping Date: April 24th
Cover Price: $1.25

Just who is Gambit? Next to nothing is known about this Cajun charmer, but some disturbing facts have risen concerning his mysterious past. In *X-Men* #6, it's revealed that Gambit is somehow linked to the murderous Sabretooth, and that he's known for running scams. So the X-Men do what they should've done back when Gambit first joined: unravel the mystery. So they all pack up and head down to New Orleans, back to Gambit's past. Little do they know that a horrible threat is lurking in the big easy's underground, and even with the help of special guest star Ghost Rider, they may be in for some deadly surprises.

Blood & Glory #1

Artist: Klaus Janson
Writer: Dan Chichester & Margaret Clark
Shipping Date: April 14th
Cover Price: $4.95

One of the most demanded team-ups in comics occurs: Captain America and the Punisher! (yeah, they met before in *Cap* #241, but that was sorta lame. This is gonna be cool!) As the story goes, the Punisher's on the trail of a drugs-for-guns conspiracy that starts in New York and leads all the way to the US Government, and has ties to some high ranking US officials! With this revelation, new clues are uncovered that lead to the Punisher's next target...Captain America! Trouble is, the good Captain has been following different clues that give the opposite conclusion: the Punisher must be taken down!

Amazing Spider-Man #363

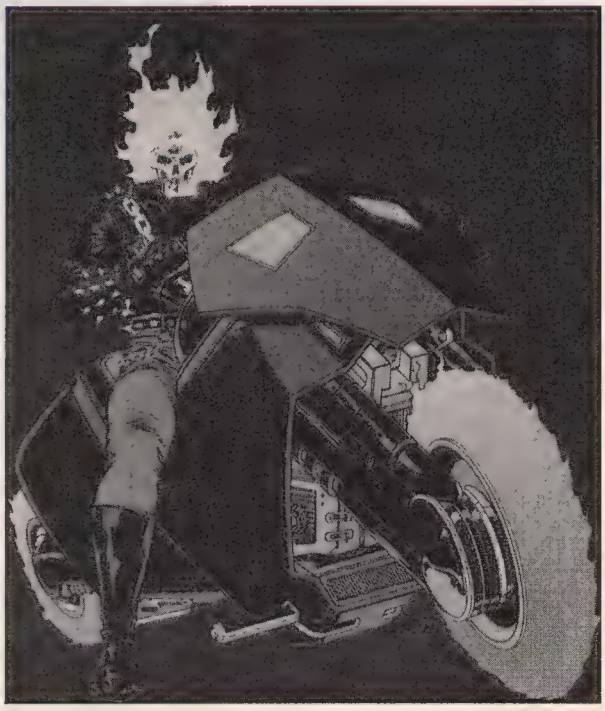
Artist: Mark Bagley
Writer: David Michilinie
Shipping Date: April 14th
Cover Price: $1.25

The Venom Spawn trilogy boils to its climax this issue as Spidey teams up with his most dangerous foe, Venom, to defeat the Venom-spawn, Carnage. But even with the combined might of Spidey and Venom, Carnage cannot be defeated, so they call in Mr. Fantastic and the Human Torch to help put the kabosh on Carnage. And for those of you who can't get enough of Venom in *Darkhawk* #13 & 14 and *Amazing Spidey* #362 & 363, keep your eyes open for the *Venom* mini series due out this summer. and if that still isn't enough, just look at the cover of the mag you're holding in your hands. Now that should do it.

Ghost Rider #26

Artist: Matt Wagner
Writer: Howard Mackie
Shipping Date: April 14th
Cover Price: $1.75

Now what could make Ghost Rider hot again after last month's spectacular pop up double page spread? How about Ghost Rider taking a trip down to New Orleans to contact Johnny Blaze in an attempt to rescue Danny Ketch, who had his throat ripped out last issue by Blackout. And who should the Spirit of Vengeance run across but the X-Men, who are down in "the big easy" trying to learn more of Gambit's mysterious past. This story continues into the pages of *X-Men* #9 (reserve your copies of this issue and *X-Men* #9 in advance. They're gonna be hot!).



MORE PICKS

Akira #37
Marvel ***$3.95***
Finally, the long awaited conclusion to Katsuhiro Otomo's epic tale is here in this final issue of the series.

Aliens: Hive #3
Dark Horse ***$2.50***
As a fierce storm begins to rise, Stan, Julie and Gill have only one place to seek shelter: the Aliens' hive!

Alpha Flight #109
Marvel ***$1.75***
World Tour p3 of 4- As Alpha Flight tour Russia, they face the old Soviet Super Soldiers!

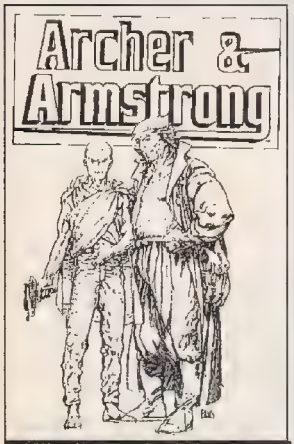
Alpha Flight #109

Marvel ***$1.75***
Death's Head arrives in 1992 to save the future, but the Avengers of 2020 is hot on his tail!

Deathstroke: The Terminator #11
DC Comics ***$1.75***
Guns and Roses p2 of 2- On her first mission, the all new Vigilante must struggle between watching out for herself and falling in love with Deathstroke.

The Demon #24
DC Comics ***$1.50***
When Etrigan is captured by the Howlers, it's up to the dynamic duo to rescue him.

Archer & Armstrong #0
Valiant ***$2.50***
Armstrong (a ten-thousand year old man with the strength of a hundred) and Archer (a twenty year old back from the dead) form the ultimate super-hero team!



Archer & Armstrong #0

Armageddon: Inferno #3
DC Comics ***$1.00***
The battle against Abraxis goes badly for our heroes, and Waverider places his final hopes with the legendary Justice Society of America. Art by Walt Simonson and Art Adams.

Detective Comics #644
DC Comics ***$1.00***
Electric City p1 of 2- Buzz Galvan goes to the electric chair and survives, only to get revenge on the city as the Electrocutioner!

Doctor Fate #40
DC Comics ***$1.75***
While Kent and Inza try to figure out their dual roles as Dr. Fate, Wonder Woman pays a visit.

Elementals #28
Comico ***$2.50***
Fathom and the Elementals begin their assault on Oblivion's personal guard as Strike Force America attacks Holocaust and the Nacht Island demons.

Black Condor #1

Excalibur #51
Marvel ***$1.75***
Pollution is usually a pain, but when it transforms innocent dinosaurs into murdering creatures, Excalibur is called into action!

Fantastic Four #365
Marvel ***$1.25***
Alpha Flight guest stars to help the FF fight Aron, the renegade Watcher in northern Canada!

Green Lantern Corps Quarterly #1
DC Comics ***$2.50***
This new double-sized quarterly will feature the exploits of various members of the new Green Lantern Corps.

Green Lantern: Mosaic #1

Batman #479
DC Comics ***$1.25***
Pagan, a new vigilante, appears in Gotham City, exacting justice from those who have committed crimes against women.

Black Condor #1
DC Comics ***$1.25***
The Jersey Devil stalks a gang of bank robbers in New Jersey, forcing Black Condor into action.

Cops: The Job #1
Marvel ***$1.25***
Ex-Cop Joe Jusko tells the story of a seasoned veteran and a female rookie as they track down a sick serial killer.

Death's Head II #4

Death's Head II #4

MORE PICKS

DC Comics
$1.25
Starting a new ongoing Green Lantern series, John Stewart has been assigned the task of maintaining order on the Mosaic World.

Guardians of the Galaxy #25
Marvel ***$2.50***
In this double sized issue, the Guardians and the Silver Surfer of the future must stop the hungry Galactus from going on a feeding frenzy!

Harbinger #7
Valiant ***$2.50***
A member of the team lies dead, and the killer is still at large. He must be found and made to pay!

Legion of Super-Heroes #30

Legion of Super-Heroes #30
DC Comics ***$1.75***
The President of Earth has been assassinated, and the unholy Dominators revel in the chaos.

Lobo's Back #2
DC Comics ***$1.50***
Since Lobo's been killed in issue #1, the afterlife's in for a tough time when Lobo arrives! So what do they do? Reincarnate Lobo as a woman! Art by Simon Bisley.

Magnus: Robot Fighter #14
Valiant ***$2.25***
In order to reach his "father," Magnus must battle his way past the Orderly-Robs, the Screwknobs and the super-human inmates of an insane asylum!

New Titans #87

Incredible Hulk #394
Marvel ***$1.25***
Pantheon member Atlanta is under attack in the Antarctic, and only the Hulk can save her.

Iron Man #281
Marvel ***$1.25***
Tony begins to finally heal from his injuries, as he ponders his role in life as the invincible Iron Man.

J.L.A. #63
DC Comics ***$1.25***
The Justice League joins Maxima to fight the new cosmic conqueror, Starbreaker.

New Titans #87
DC Comics ***$1.75***
The New Titans of the future begin to fight the Titans, as Superman and Deathstroke guest star. Also, Nightwing introduces a new costume!

New Warriors #24
Marvel ***$1.25***
Firestar testifies against Marvel Boy as Night Thrasher betrays the New Warriors in their battle against the Folding Circle!

Next Men #3
Dark Horse ***$2.50***
The world realizes the power of the Project: Next Men escapees when a simple rescue attempt turns into a violent bloodbath. By John Byrne.

New Warriors #24

Justice League Quarterly #7
DC Comics ***$3.50***
Blue Beetle takes some of his Justice League friends to his high school reunion, just as aliens attack. Also featuring Global Guardians and Captain Glory stories.

L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 #40
DC Comics ***1.50***
A murder is committed in deep space, and only L.E.G.I.O.N. can take care of it, but is Lady Quark slowly going insane?

Legend of the Dark Knight #31
DC Comics ***1.75***
When Alfred is kidnapped and killed by terrorist drug smugglers, Batman becomes a one-man army to take them down.

Nomad #2

Nomad #2
Marvel ***$1.75***
Nomad helps an animal rights group stop the Roadkill Club, who kills innocent bunnies and stuff. Cameo by USAgent.

Punisher: War Zone #4
Marvel ***$1.75***
Frank Castle continues to use his cover in the mafia to kill members of the mob. Unless he's careful, it's curtains for him!

Rai #5
Valiant ***$2.25***
As Rai is exiled, Japan seals its outer shell forever!

MORE PICKS

Shadowman #3
Valiant ***$2.50***
The One in the Shadows walks into the biggest battle in his young life! Written by Steve Englehart.

Silver Surfer #66
Marvel ***$1.25***
The most beautiful woman in the universe wants the Surfer, and enlists the aid of Love and Hate to get him! Art by Ron Lim.

Solar, Man of The Atom #11
Valiant ***$2.25***
The Man of the Atom battles the Man Without a Planet, the last survivor of what was before, in this epilogue to Solar's ten part origin story. By Jim Shooter and Barry Windsor-Smith.

Punisher War Zone #4

Uncanny X-Men #289
Marvel ***$1.25***
After Bishop becomes the newest member of the team, the other members must come to terms with him.

Warlock & The Infinity Watch #5
Marvel ***$1.75***
Omega has taken down the Watch, and only Adam Warlock is left to oppose his acquiring all the gems!

Web of Spider-Man #89
Marvel ***$1.25***
In the final issue of the Name of the Rose storyline, Richard Fisk becomes the new Kingpin, and Rose becomes Blood Rose, with assault weaponry!

Superman #68

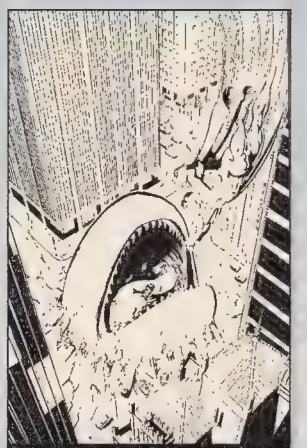
Spider-Man #23
Marvel ***$1.75***
Revenge of the Sinister Six p6- Ghost Rider, Solo, Deathlok, Hulk, Nova and the Fantastic Four team up to fight the Sinister Six!

Star Wars: Dark Empire #3
Dark Horse ***$2.95***
The battle for Calamari erupts, while the massive World Devastators threaten to end all hostilities, along with the planet!

Wolverine #55
Marvel ***$1.75***
Gambit and Wolverine journey to Japan to find Jubilee, and Logan has a painful and long-awaited reunion with Mariko.

Wonder Man #10
Marvel ***$1.25***
Simon comes to term with his new powers as he meets up with the remnants of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia.

Youngblood #3
Malibu ***$2.50***
The first series in Rob Liefeld's new super-hero universe concludes with a special glow-in-the-dark cover, and two more limited edition Youngblood trading cards!


Superman: Man of Steel #12

Superman #68
DC Comics ***$1.25***
Superman must bring down Deathstroke the Terminator in this crossover with Deathstroke #12 & 13.

Superman: Man of Steel #12
DC Comics ***$1.25***
Superman discovers exactly what's been lurking beneath the city's streets as the underworld of Metropolis is introduced. Written by Louise Simonson.

Terminator: Hunters & Killers #2
Dark Horse ***$2.50***
Will the nuclear ICBMs on a lost Soviet submarine fall into the hands of the Russian rebels or the Russian terminators?

Web of Spider-Man #89

X-Factor #79
Marvel ***$1.25***
X-Factor travels to France to stop the new menace of Helle's Belles. By Peter David and Larry Stroman.

X-Force #11
Marvel ***$1.25***
Gideon and the Highlords come together to stop X-Force at any cost.

X-O Manowar #6
Valiant ***$1.95***
The Revelation Saga p2 of 2- X-O battles with Ax's technological terror force in a fight between barbarism and electronic wizardry! By Jim Shooter and Barry Windsor-Smith.

The Wizard Of Cards

By Stephen Shamus

The hottest items in this hobby right now seem to be all these autograph insert cards. There's something about them that makes collectors and investors go ga-ga. These cards are basically impossible to counterfeit because they are usually different from the regular issue cards, and in a market where forgery exists, these cards eliminate the risks.

It all started with Star Pics and Upper Deck in 1990. Star Pics introduced its basketball draft pick set, and included as a bonus one autographed card in every fifty sets. The autograph cards had small round stickers on the back to guarantee the authenticity. Upper Deck had a Reggie Jackson autographed card inserted in its 1990 baseball hi-foil packs. Finding one was a real shot in the dark, but quite a few turned up. More importantly, it created a frenzy amongst everyone to rip open the packs.

It continued in 1991, but this time two new companies had joined in: Donruss and Score. Upper Deck had Nolan Ryan, Fergie Jenkins, Harmon Killebrew and Gaylord Perry sign cards for its low series foil, and they put Hank Aaron cards in their hi series. Donruss had Ryne Sandberg sign 5,000 cards for its set, while Score had the Mick sign 2,500 cards for its Series II foil packs.

Upper Deck continued their tradition with their 1991 football issue by inserting 2,500 Joe Montana cards in its low foil packs and 2,500 Broadway Joe Namath cards in its hi-foil. In their 1991-92 hockey issue, Brett Hull is the man to be found. In 1992, Fleer, Classic and Pro Line football cards all jumped on the autograph bandwagon. Fleer included Roger Clemens in this year's baseball set, while Classic had all the players in its 4-Sport Draft foil autograph 2,500 cards each. Pro Line football also had all the players in its inaugural edition sign their cards.

By the way, for 1992 Upper Deck has Ted Williams as the signee, while Donruss has Cal Ripken Jr, and Score has the living legend, Joe DiMaggio. Have fun pack-busting and good luck in finding these collectibles!

RON LIM VENOM HOLOGRAM

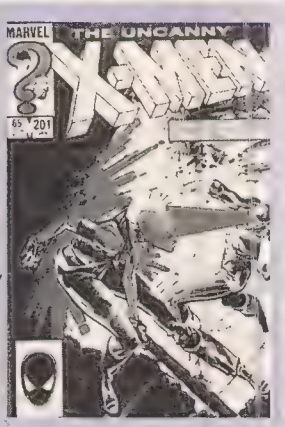
Advance Comics and Impel recently released this Venom Hologram promotional card as part of the Marvel Series III set. Venom's already selling for $7.00!

TOP 10 APRIL 1992

We keep a very close watch on all the hottest books trading hands throughout the country. Here we have listed for you the 10 most commonly sold and demanded comics.

Uncanny X-Men #201

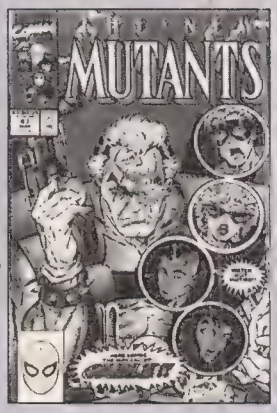
Artist: Rick Leonardi & Whilce Portacio
Writer: Chris Claremont



Continuing its reign on the #1 spot, one of the most controversial comics in the market today is also the hottest. Now what makes this book so incredibly popular? Well, you all know who the hottest character in comics is. Cable, right? And we all know his first appearance is *New Mutants* #87, right? Sort of. Y'see, the biggest rumor in comicdom right now is that Nathan Summers (Cyclops' baby son) is Cable, and that mystery baby made his first appearance right here. If you were one of the lucky dogs who bought this way back when we ran it in the Wizard Comic Watch in issue #4, congrats!

New Mutants #87

Artist: Rob Liefeld
Writer: Louise Simonson

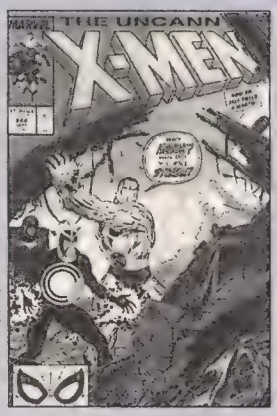


Still unable to reclaim the coveted #1 spot, *New Mutants* #87, the undisputed first appearance of Cable, Marvel's main mystery man, remains at the #2 slot. So the war starts, who will win out: the mysterious *X-Men* #201 with its baby shrouded in controversy, or the dynamic introduction of X-Forces' team leader, Cable? Golly, I wonder if Liefeld knew what he was doing when he created this guy? And was he watching H.B.O. (??)

Uncanny X-Men #248

Artist: Jim Lee
Writer: Chris Claremont

Jim "Can I sell books or what?" Lee's *X-Men* #248 continues to wait in the wings to claim itself "King of the Hill" in the month to come. Jim's best known for his work on the X-Men series, and this is what started it all. Interesting to see how Jim's leaving of the X-Men will affect this book. Seeing how he's going directly into a new project, *Wildcats*, it probably won't hurt this book too much. One thing for sure, though, I'm gonna miss those Jim Lee Psylockes.

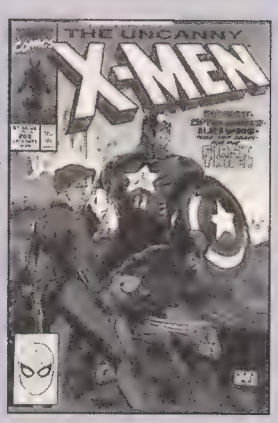


Uncanny X-Men #266

Artist: Mike Collins
Writer: Chris Claremont

Even with clues surfacing revealing that Gambit is a lot less than an angel, he remains one of the X-Men's most popular members. In recent issues of *X-Men*, it turns out that Gambit has a very shadowy past, and may or may not have worked with Sabretooth. Golly. Even so, the first appearance of Gambit remains a hot prospect. For some more info on everyone's favorite crayfish eatin cajun, check out *X-Men* #9, which takes place in Louisiana and may push this book to #1!!

5 Uncanny X-Men #268



Artist: Jim Lee
Writer: Chris Claremont

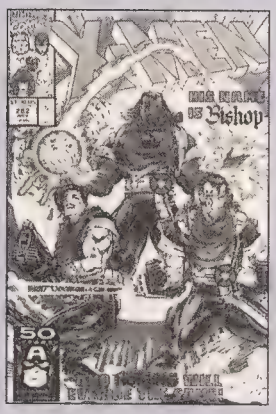
Moving up a notch is Jim Lee's first work on the *X-Men* as the regular artist. Talk about hot stories, this one revolves around a never before told World War II story, in which Wolverine (in the days before his adamantium skeleton and claws), teams up with a still wet behind the ears Captain America and the Black Widow (such a cute little girl). All in all, a top notch book. With all the current stories delving into Logan's past, expect this book, an important flashback issue, to become more prominent in the public eye.

6 X-Factor #24

Artist: Walt Simonson
Writer: Louise Simonson

Slipping a notch from last issue, the first complete appearance of Archangel has been pushed to the cover levels by heavy hitters Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld. Don't count him out yet though. Walt and Weezie's high flying Angel of Death maintains a high profile through constant exposure in the pages of *Uncanny X-Men*. Rumor also has it that the Mutant that gave Archangel his new wings, Apocalypse, also gave Wolverine his special skeleton and claw. If this is true, it would definitely give this book a surge and make it a #1 contender!!

7 Uncanny X-Men #282



Artist: Whilce Portacio
Writer: John Byrne

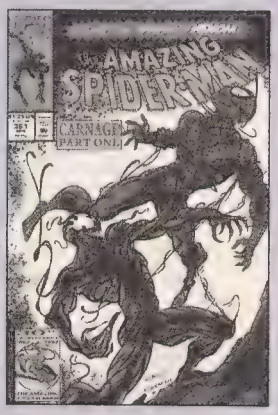
Holding its own at the #7 spot, the first appearance of Bishop (though only a cameo, check issue #283 for a full appearance) has really caused a stir in the Marvel Universe. This mysterious character from the future carries with him a rich history, including the stunning secret: which X-Man will murder the team in the near future? Bishop knows the question, and his desperate search for the answer will cast him in the spotlight of Marvel's X-Men books.

8 Ghost Rider #1

Artist: Javier Saltares
Writer: Howard Mackie

The debut of the Spirit of Vengeance is slowly revving his engine and has started creeping up the charts. With all the attention on ol' flame skull these days, because of the spectacular "pop-up" in *Ghost Rider* #25, G.R. has really hit it big. And if you wanna look past all the glamor and hype, this series consistently has had some of the best writing and artwork in mainstream comics. With issue #26 sporting a guest appearance by the X-Men, expect even higher demand for this book.

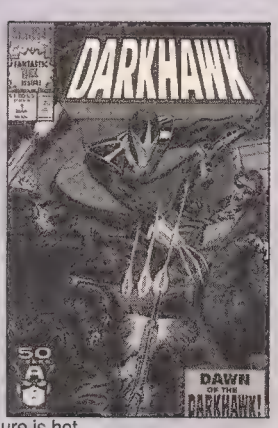
9 Amazing Spider-Man #361



Artist: Mark Bagley
Writer: David Michilinie

Entering the top ten list at the #9 position, the first full appearance of Carnage has taken everyone by surprise. Now, everyone knew this book was going to be hot, but no one knew how hot. With this character having such strong ties to Venom, it's really no wonder that this book has done so well. This is the first chapter in a three issue storyline, and with Venom in the next two issues, expect this issue to grow even stronger. With the first appearances of some of Marvel's cooler villains going for big bucks, don't let this one slip by.

10 Darkhawk #1



Artist: Mike Manley
Writer: Danny Fingeroth

Holding in the #10 slot *Darkhawk* #1, the first appearance of Darkhawk, one of Marvel's hottest new characters, has generated a tremendous fan following. With recent appearances of Venom in this series, and Darkhawk appearing in the pages of *New Warriors*, Hawk's popularity is at an all time high. With Darkhawk tying into the new Infinity war storyline, expect even more interest to be placed upon this hero. So keep your eye on this lil' bugger. He may not be a mutant from the future or anything, but he sure is hot.

WIZARD Market Watch

With the revelation that some of the biggest names from Marvel are starting up their own company, Marvel's X-Books may be in for some stormy weather. Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio, Chris Claremont and Marc Silvestri are all gearing up over at Image Press to create a whole new universe of characters. Todd McFarlane and Erik Larsen have also joined Marvel's ex-team to insure that the formation of this new company is the biggest thing since gay superheroes.

Speaking of which, *Alpha Flight* #106, where Northstar revealed to the world that he's gay, continues to climb the sales ladder.

Dark Horse, after hitting a bit of a dry spell a few months back, has really hit it big these last few months with their spectacular movie tie-ins. For some really cool stories that follow up on your favorite movies, check out books like *The Thing*, *Star Wars: Dark Empire*, *Predator: Bloody Sands of Time*, *Aliens: Hive*, and future projects such as the new *Aliens vs Predator* series and the Terminator/Robocop crossover (by Frank Miller and Walt Simonson). Very cool stuff.

Innovation's adaptations of Anne Rice's novels continue to be a big hit with the comic audience. With the release of the new *Queen Of The Damned* series, Innovation has sparked more attention to *The Vampire Lestat* and *Interview With A Vampire* comic adaptations.

Valiant continues to be a major force in the industry with their line of super quality books. Keep an eye on back issues of *Solar: Man Of The Atom*, *Magnus: Robot Fighter*, *Harbinger*, *Rai*, *X-O Manowar* and *Shadowman*. Two new titles to keep an eye out for are *Archer And Armstrong*,

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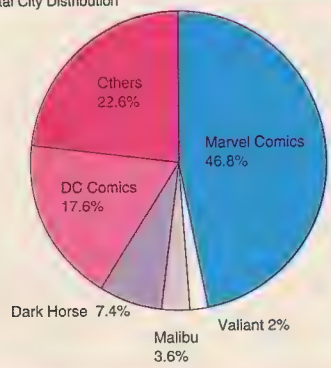

Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for February according to Capital City Distribution

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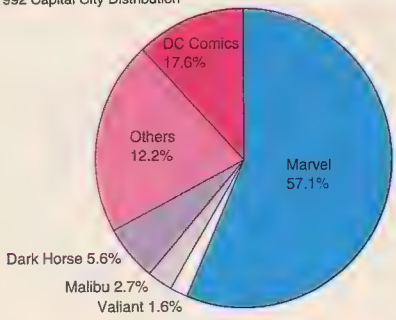

Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for February according to Capital City Distribution

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. JIM LEE
X-Men, upcoming project: *Wildcats*

2. TODD McFARLANE
upcoming project: *Spawn*

3. ROB LIEFELD
Youngblood, *X-Force*, upcoming: *Brigade*

4. WHILCE PORTACIO
Uncanny X-Men

5. RON LIM
Silver Surfer, *Infinity War*

6. ERIK LARSON
Spider-Man, upcoming: *Savage Dragon*

7. JOHN BYRNE
Next Men, *She-Hulk*, *Namor*, *2112*

8. ART ADAMS
Armageddon: Inferno, upcoming: *Godzilla*

9. MIKE ZECK
Deathstroke the Terminator covers

10. SAM KIETH
Marvel Comics Presents

and *The Eternal Warrior* - both look good. The upcoming Unity crossover series should also bring a lot of attention to this great line of books.

Impact Comics continues to struggle in the direct market. The New Universe, Marvel's equivalent to Impact, died many years ago. It lasted a relatively short time and never gathered a large following. Impact could be following in its footsteps.

For those of you who would like to try something different, give Tundra Publishing a little of your time. Try *Trailer Trash* for some major laughs, or some of the *Taboo* trade paperbacks for some unique storytelling. If you can't find 'em, tell your storekeeper to order 'em. They're worth giving a shot.

DC Comics continues to put out high quality comics, as long as they stay away from gimmicks. Such disappointments as the *Robin II* mini - series and the *Wisdom of Lobo* trade paperback has left a bad taste in the mouths of consumers and retailers alike. So we hope that from now on, DC Comics sticks to what they do best...good stories with the characters we love.

THIS MONTH'S BIGGEST MOVERS

Alpha Flight #106
from $12.00 to $20.00

Amazing Spider-Man #361
from $1.25 to $8.50

Uncanny X-Men #201
from $22.00 to $35.00

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

CALIFORNIA

MAR 21 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

MAR 25 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

MAR 28 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

MAR 29 CA, GLENDALE, South CA Comic Book & Sports Card & Collectalbe Show, Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N.Verdugo Rd. T:60 F:$50, 2@$90 A:$2.50(under6free) 10am-4pm, Dean Chen 818-842-1861

APR 1 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

APR 8 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

APR 12 CA, SAN FRANSISCO, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, Golden Gateway, 1500 Van Ness Ave. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 15 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

APR 22 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

APR 26 CA, LOS ANGELES, Comic Book Convention, Airport Marina Hotel, 8601 LIncoln Blvd. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 29 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pin Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E.Walnut Dr. N. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

COLORADO

APR 12 CO, DENVER, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, I-70 at Chambers Rd. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

CONNECTICUT

MAR 22 CT, EAST HARTFORD, Comic Book Convention, East Hartford Elks Hall, 148 Roberts St. F:$35 A:$.99 11am-5pm, Hal Kinney 203-289-1208

APR 7 CT, STAMFORD, Stamford Sportscard & Comic Show, Stamford Marriott, 2 Stamford Forum. T:70 F:$45(6ft),$55(8ft) A:$2(under10:$.99) 10am-4pm, Donald Ellis 203-746-7531

APR 18 CT, HARTFORD, Hartford Civic Center Comic and Card Show, Hartford Civic Center. T:100 F:$65 A:$3 9am-5pm, Zach Schenker 201-791-1675

APR 25 CT, NEW HAVEN, Comic Book Convention, Park Plaza Hotel, 155 Temple St. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 26 CT, EAST HARTFORD, Comic Book Convention, East Hartford Elks Hall, 148 Roberts St. F:$35 A:$.99 11am-5pm, Hal Kinney 203-289-1208

MAY 17 CT, EAST HARTFORD, Comic Book Convention, East Hartford Elks Hall, 148 Roberts St. F:$35 A:$.99 11am-5pm, Hal Kinney 203-289-1208

EUROPE

MAY 14-17 CZHECKOSLOVAKIA, PRAGUE, Eurocomics: Prague '92, Exhibitions Grounds, Palace of Culture. Avencourt Exhibitions Ltd (London) 44-71-266-1986 or fax: 44-71-586-2429

ILLINOIS

MAR 21 IL, CHICAGO, Chicago Sci-Fi and Comic Book Convention, St. Cyprian Episcopal Church, 6501 West Belmont Ave. T:20 F:$10 9am-4pm, John Spruhan 312-622-5433

MAR 21 IL, ROSEMONT, Comic Book Convention, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$40 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

MAR 22 IL, HILLSIDE, Comic Book and Baseball Card Show, Hillside Holiday Inn, I-290 btwn Wolf & Mannhelm Rds. A:$1 10am-3pm, Graham Crackers Comics, 708-355-4310

MAR 29 IL, CHICAGO, Comic Book Convention, Ford City Holiday Inn, 7353 S.Cicero Ave. T:50 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

APR 4 IL, ORLAND PARK, For Comic Lovers Only!, Orland Park Civic Center, 147th St & Lagrange Rd (rt 45). T:40 F:$30 A:$1 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

APR 5 IL, ROSEMONT, Comic Book Convention, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$45 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

APR 12 IL, NAPERVILLE, All Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, on Warrenville Rd near Naperville Rd & Tollway I-88. A:$1 10am-3pm, Graham Crackers Comics 355-4310

APR 18 IL, ROSEMONT, Comic Book Convention, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$40 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

APR 24-26 IL, DES PLAINES, Hobby & Collectibles Show, Des Plaines Mall, 700 Pearson St. T:150 F:$45, Amazing Promotions 708-776-7176

APR 25 IL, HARVEY, Comic and Card Show, South Side Exposition Center, I-80 & Halsted. T:50 F:$35 A:$free 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

APR 26 IL, CHICAGO, Comic Book Convention, Ford City Holiday Inn, 7353 S.Cicero Ave. T:50 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

APR 26 IL, CHICAGO, Comic Book Convention, Hyatt Regency Woodfield, 1800 East Golf Rd. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

MAY 3 IL, ROSEMONT, Comic Book Convention, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$45 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

MAY 9 IL, ROSEMONT, Comic Book Convention, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$40 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

MAY 12 IL, ROSEMONT, For Comic Lovers Only, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N.Mannheim Rd. T:45 F:$35 A:1 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-8881

MAY 16 IL, ROSEMONT, Comic Book Convention, Horizon Skyline Room, 6925 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$40 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

MAY 17 IL, CHICAGO, Comic Book Convention, Ford City Holiday Inn, 7353 S.Cicero Ave. T:50 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-3113

MAY 17 IL, HILLSIDE, Comic Book and Baseball Card Show, Hillside Holiday Inn, I-290 btwn Wolf & Mannhelm Rds. A:$1 10am-3pm, Graham Crackers Comics, 708-355-4310

INDIANA

MAR 27 IN, HIGHLAND, Highland's Monthly Card and Comic Show, Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln Str. T:20 F:$20 A:$1 6pm-10pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

APR 12 IN, CROWN POINT, Crown Point's Monthly Card and Comic Show, American Legion, 1410 N. Main. T:20 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

APR 12 IN, INDIANAPOLIS, Comic Book Convention, Sheraton NE, 7701 East 42nd St. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 24 IN, HIGHLAND, Highland's Monthly Card and Comic Show, Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln Str. T:20 F:$20 A:$1 6pm-10pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

MAY 3 IN, CROWN POINT, Crown Point's Monthly Card and Comic Show, American Legion, 1410 N. Main. T:20 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

IOWA

MAR 29 IA, CEDAR RAPIDS, Cedar Rapids Comics & Card Show, Sheraton Inn, 525 33rd Ave SW. F:$35 A:$1 9am-6pm, Comic Shoppe Plus 319-365-4783

APR 5 IA, OSKALOOSA, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Howard Johnson's, 4800 Merle Hay Rd. T:20 F:$50,2@$90 A:free 10am-4pm, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

APR 25-26 IA, OSKALOOSA, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, 1111 East Army Post Rd. T:40 F:$60,2@$100 A:free Mall Hours, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

KENTUCKY

MAR 28 KY, LEXINGTON, Lexington Comicon, Ramada Inn Hotel Convention Center, off I-75 at exit 115 on Newton Pk. F:$45 A:$2, Steve Logan 606-269-6633

MAY 2 KY, LOUISVILLE, Comic Book Convention, Hurstborne Hotel & Conf. Ctr, 9700 Bluegrass Pky. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises

Portland Comic Extravaganza

Friday, May 29th • 2pm - 9pm
Saturday, May 30th • 10 am - 6pm
Sunday, May 31st • 11 am - 5pm
At
Eastport Plaza • 4000 SE 82nd, Portland, Oregon

Directions:
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go west approximately 10 blocks (82nd & Powell), turn left on 82nd, go 3 blocks,
Eastport Plaza is on the left

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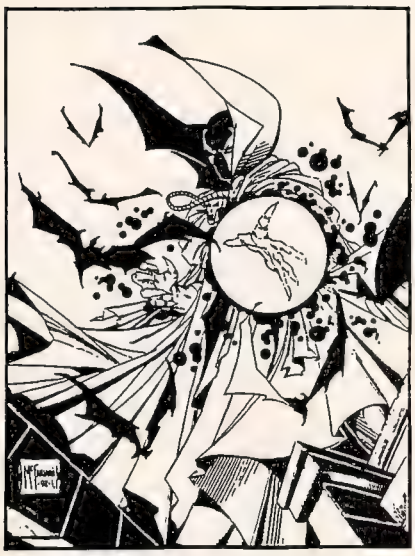

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Friday, May 29th - **Marc Silvestri** • 2pm - 8pm
Wolverine, Web of Spiderman

Saturday, May 30th - **Rob Liefeld** • 10 am - 4 pm
Youngblood, X-Force, New Mutants
also appearing Saturday **Hank Kanalz** • Youngblood writer

Sunday, May 31st - **Todd McFarlane** • 11 am - 5 pm
Spawn, Spiderman, Amazing Spiderman

Autographs $1 each
(max 3 per person per day)

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SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

301-292-4587

MAY 3 KY, LEXINGTON, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn (north), 1950 Newton Pike. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

MARYLAND

MAR 22 MD, BALTIMORE, Comic Book Convention, Days Hotel, I-83 exit 17. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 5 MD, BALTIMORE, Reality Comic Book Convention, Sheraton, Elm Rd at BWI Airport. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

APR 12 MD, SILVER SPRING, Reality Comic Book Convention, Armory Place, 925 Wayne Ave. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

APR 25 MD, SILVER SPRING, Comic Book Convention, Amory Place, 925 Wayne Ave. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

MASSACHUSETTS

MAR 22 MA, TAUNTON, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 700 Myles Standish Blvd. T:50 F:$45,2@$85 A:$1.50 9:30am-3:30pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

MAR 26 MA, SEEKONK, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Johnson & Wales Inn, Rts 114A & 44. T:40 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1.50 6pm-10pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

MAR 29 MA, NEW BEDFORD, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Days Inn, 500 Hathaway Rd. T:50 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1.50 9:30am-3:30pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

APR 2 MA, WESTPORT, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Whites, Rt 6. T:50 F:$45,2@$85 A:$1.50 6pm-10pm, Chris Christopher 508-763-8570

APR 2-5 MA, CHELSEA, Comic Book Convention, Mystic Mall, Rt 16 Everett Ave & Rt 1 Carter St. A:free Mall Hours, Bill Gouvalaris 617-289-8662

APR 4 MA, N. FALMOUTH, Comics and Cards Show, Heritage Christian Academy, 655 Boxberry Hill Rd. A:$1.50 11am-5pm, Heritage Christian Academy 508-564-6341

APR 5 MA, TAUNTON, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 700 Myles Standish Blvd. T:50 F:$45,2@$85 A:$1.50 9:30am-3:30pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

APR 9 MA, NEW BEDFORD, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Days Inn, 500 Hathaway Rd. T:50 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1.50 6pm-10pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

APR 11 MA, WESTPORT, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Whites, Rt 6. T:50 F:$45,2@$85 A:$1.50 9:30am-3:30pm, Chris Christopher 508-763-8570

APR 16 MA, SWANSEA, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Venus De Milo, 75 Gar Hwy, rt 6. T:40 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1.50 6pm-10pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

APR 26 MA, NEW BEDFORD, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Days Inn, 500 Hathaway Rd. T:50 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1.50 9:30am-3:30pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

APR 30 MA, SEEKONK, Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Johnson & Wales Inn, Rts 114A & 44. T:40 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1.50 6pm-10pm, Earl Davis 508-675-0400

MICHIGAN

MAR 28-29 MI, DETROIT, Comic Book Show, Dearborn Civic Center, 15801 Michigan Ave at Greenfield. F:$150 A:$6/day($10both days) 11am-7pm(sat) -5pm(sun), Michael Goldman 313-350-2633

APR 25 MI, DETROIT, Comic Book Convention, Royce Hotel, Marriman Rd exit off I-94. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

MISSOURI

MAY 17 MO, ST. LOUIS, St. Louis Comic Book Show, Kolping House, 4035 Keokuk. A:$1 11am-3:30pm, Spector Club 314-772-1548

NEW JERSEY

MAR 22 NJ, TOMS RIVER, Ocean County Comic Book Convention, Knights of Columbus Post #4969, Tennyson & Whittier Aves. T:30 F:$40 A:$1.50 10am-5pm, Ruth Campbell 908-269-9486

MAR 28 NJ, MONTVALE, Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, 100 Chestnut Ridge Rd. T:50 F:$45 A:$1.50 9:30am-4:30pm, Greg 201-445-7280

MAR 29 NJ, WOODBRIDGE, Reality Comic Book Convention, Sheraton, 515 Rt.1 South. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

APR 5 NJ, BORDENTOWN, Showplace For Collectors, Day Inn, rte 206. T:30 F:$35 A:$2 10am-5pm, Ruth Campbell 908-269-9486

APR 5 NJ, SPRINGFIELD, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, 304 Rte 23 West. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 11 NJ, PARAMUS, Comic Book Convention, Radisson Inn, 601 from Road. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 12 NJ, CLIFTON, Clifton Comic Book Expo, Community Recreation Center, 1232 Main Ave. A:$1 10am-4pm, Pug Productions 201-472-8091

APR 18 NJ, SEASIDE HEIGHTS, Jersey Shore Comic Book Convention, American Legion Post #351, Carteret Ave at Bay Blvd. T:36 F:$40 A:free 10am-5pm, Ruth Campbell 908-269-9486

MAY 10 NJ, CLIFTON, Clifton Comic Book Expo, Community Recreation Center, 1232 Main Ave. A:$1 10am-4pm, Pug Productions 201-472-8091

NEW YORK

MAR 21 NY, NEW YORK, Our Lady of Good Counsel School Baseball Card and Comic Show, 323 East 91 Street. A:$1 10am-4pm, Kevin Mullarkey 212-289-6730

MAR 22 NY, FARMINGDALE, Comic Book & Baseball Card & Toy Show, Masonic Temple, 197 Hempstead Tpk (rt 24). A:free 10am-4pm, Ray or Pat 516-669-4332

MAR 22 NY, RIVERDALE, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Riverdale YMHA, 5625 Arlington Ave. T:35 F:$55,2@$100 A:$2(members$1) 10am-6pm, On The Ball 914-794-2299

MAR 23 NY, QUEENS, Baseball Cards and Comic Books Show, A.Gordon Webster American Legion Hall, 107-10 Rockaway Blvd. T:35 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Joseph Caruana 718-845-7240

MAR 26 NY, BUFFALO, Comic and Card Show, Polish Falcons Club, 445 Columbia Ave. T:42 6pm-10pm, Frank Caparaso 716-681-3422

APR 5 NY, SARATOGA SPGS, St. Clement's Monthly Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, St. Clement's School Gym, 231 Lake Ave. T:30 F:$35,2+@$30ea A:$1 1pm-6pm, Rocco Rosato 518-584-1429

APR 12 NY, NEW YORK, Comic Book Convention, Ramada Hotel, 33rd and 7th Ave. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 12 NY, OCEANSIDE, Long Island Comic Book and Collector's Market Convention, Rockville Cntr Holiday Inn, 173 Sunrise Hwy. T:40 A:free 10am-5pm, Cosmic Comics 516-763-1133

APR 18 NY, NEW YORK, Our Lady of Good Counsel School Baseball Card and Comic Show, 323 East 91 Street. A:$1 10am-4pm, Kevin Mullarkey 212-289-6730

APR 19 NY, BAYSHORE, Comic Book & Baseball Card & Toy Show, Masonic Temple, 2 Union Blvd. T:30 A:free, Ray or Pat Weiss 516-669-4332

APR 23 NY, BUFFALO, Comic and Card Show, Polish Falcons Club, 445 Columbia Ave. T:42 6pm-10pm, Frank Caparaso 716-681-3422

APR 26 NY, FARMINGDALE, Comic Book & Baseball Card & Toy Show, Masonic Temple, 197 Hempstead Tpk (rt 24). A:free 10am-4pm, Ray or Pat 516-669-4332

APR 26 NY, QUEENS, Baseball Cards and Comic Books Show, A.Gordon Webster American Legion Hall, 107-10 Rockaway Blvd. T:35 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Joseph Caruana 718-845-7240

APR 26 NY, RIVERDALE, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Riverdale YMHA, 5625 Arlington Ave. T:35 F:$55,2@$100 A:$2(members$1) 10am-6pm, On The Ball 914-794-2299

APR 26 NY, ROCHESTER, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, exit 18A off I-390. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

MAY 3 NY, OCEANSIDE, Long Island Comic Book and Collector's Market Convention, Rockville Cntr Holiday Inn, 173 Sunrise Hwy. T:40 A:free 10am-5pm, Cosmic Comics 516-763-1133

MAY 3 NY, SARATOGA SPGS, St. Clement's Monthly Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, St. Clement's School Gym, 231 Lake Ave. T:30 F:$35,2+@$30ea A:$1 1pm-6pm, Rocco Rosato 518-584-1429

MAY 16 NY, NEW YORK, Our Lady of Good Counsel School Baseball Card and Comic Show, 323 East 91 Street. A:$1 10am-4pm, Kevin Mullarkey 212-289-6730

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

MAY 17 NY, RIVERDALE, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Riverdale YMHA, 5625 Arlington Ave. T:35 F:$55,2@$100 A:$2(members$1) 10am-6pm, On The Ball 914-794-2299

NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 16 NC, ROCKY MOUNT, Rocky Mount Comic Book Convention, Tarrytown Mall, 2320 Sunset Ave. T:30 F:$40(before4/15)$50(4/15-5/1) A:free 10am-6pm, Scott's Comics 919-571-1310

NORTH DAKOTA

MAY 9-10 ND, FARGO, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 13th Ave S and Interstate 29. T:42 F:$50 9am-5pm(sat)10am-4:30pm(sun), Kevin Bergson 701-235-2562

OHIO

MAR 22 OH, CLEVELAND, Reality Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, 4181 W.150th St. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

MAR 22 OH, MENTOR, Infield Promotions Comic Book & Non-Sport Card Show, Traveldoge Hotel, 1-271 to I-90 to ex306N. T:40 F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-5pm, Irene Pike 1-216-255-8778

MAR 28 OH, CINCINNATI, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, US 42 Interstate 275. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

MAR 29 OH, DAYTON, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, Interstate 75 exit 44. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

MAY 16-17 OH, NORTH COAST, North Coast Comic Con, Holiday Inn-Hudson. RAP Productions 419-526-0438

MAY 17 OH, MENTOR, Infield Promotions Comic Book & Non-Sport Card Show, Traveldoge Hotel, 1-271 to I-90 to ex306N. T:40 F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-5pm, Irene Pike 1-216-255-8778

OKLAHOMA

APR 4-5 OK, OKLAHOMA CITY, O'Comicon II, Central Plaza Hotel, 112 N. Eastern Ave. T:30 F:$40 A:$6(under6free) 9am-7pm, 405-737-8103

PENNSYLVANIA

MAR 21 PA, SHARON, Def-Con 1 Comic Con, Ramada Inn Shenango. F:$30 10am-4pm, Def-Con 1 Conventions 412-372-4774

MAR 22 PA, DELAWARE WATER GAP, Card & Coin & Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, exit 53 off rt 80. T:60, Lightning Productions 717-238-5386

MAR 22 PA, YORK, York Comicon IX, Holiday Inn, Rte 30. F:$40 A:$3 10am-4pm, Ned or Bill 717-843-6516

MAR 27 PA, HARRISBURG, Card & Coin & Comic Book Show, Colonial Park Mall, Rt 22 & Colonial Rd. T:65, Lightning Productions 717-238-5386

MAR 28 PA, WILLIAMSPORT, Def-Con 1 Comic Con, Williamsport Sheraton, 100 Pine St. F:$40 10am-4pm, Def-Con 1 Conventions 412-372-4774

MAR 29 PA, LANCASTER, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 1492 Lititz Pike. 11am-4pm, Platinum Age Comics 717-272-5446

APR 4 PA, MONROEVILLE, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, 2750 MOsside Blvd. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 5 PA, ALTOONA, Comic Book Convention, Ramada Hotel, 1 Sheratorn Dr. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 5 PA, PHILADELPHIA, Comic Book Convention, City Line Holiday Inn, City Ave at ex.33 off Schuykill exp. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 5 PA, PITTSBURGH, Comic Book Convention, Sheraton at Station Square. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 12 PA, HARRISBURG, Comic Book Convention, Harrisburg West Host, I-83 exit 18A. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 12 PA, YORK, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 183 & rt 20. 11am-4pm, Platinum Age Comics 717-272-5446

APR 26 PA, ALLENTOWN, Comic Book Convention, Allentown Hilton, 9th & Hamilton Steets. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 26 PA, HARRISBURG, Reality Comic Book Convention, Host Hotel, I-83 exit 18A. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

MAY 10 PA, EASTON, Easton Comic Book Show, The Easton Inn, 185 S. 3rd St and Larry Holmes Dr. T:28 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Comiquest Productions 215-437-4674

MAY 17 PA, ALLENTOWN, Comic Book Show, Allentown Hilton, 9th & Hamilton Streets. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

MAY 17 PA, HAZLETON, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, Rt 309. 11am-4pm, Platinum Age Comics 717-272-5446

RHODE ISLAND

MAY 15-16 RI, PORTSMOUTH, Newport Antiques & Collectables Festival, Glen Farm, Rte 138. Show Promotion Inc 1-800-759-7469

TENNESSEE

MAR 22 TN, NASHVILLE, Comic Book Convention, Ramada Inn, 2401 Music Valley Dr. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 11 TN, KNOXVILLE, Classy Con 17, Holiday Inn Northwest, I-75 at Merchants Rd ex. T:30 A:$2 10am-4pm, Mark Derrick 615-624-3702

APR 11 TN, NASHVILLE, Comic Book Convention, Ramada Inn South. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

APR 17-19 TN, PIGEON FORGE, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, N.Parkway. T:30 F:$125,3@$300 A:$2(under6free,$1:7-16) 9am-6pm(fri&sat) 10am-5pm(sun), Stephen Osborne 615-428-0407

APR 19 TN, NASHVILLE, Blow-Out Sports Cards & Comic Books Show, Quality Inn, Briley Pkwy & Intl. Dr. T:50 F:$25,2@$40,3@$55,4@$70 A:$1 9am-5pm, Steve Dillard 615-952-4168

TEXAS

MAR 29 TX, PAMPA, Major League Sports Spring Card & Comic & Record Show, M.K. Brown Auditorium, 1000 N.Sumner. F:$25 A:$1, Ronnie Holmes 806-665-0948

APR 4-5 TX, SAN ANGELO, San Angelo Comic Books & Sport Card Show, Convention Center, 500 Rio Concho Dr. T:40 F:$45 A:$1 9am-6pm(sat)10am-5pm(sun), Dale Anderseon or Melissa 915-657-0297

MAY 16 TX, DALLAS, Dallas Minicon, Parkway Hilton Hotel, 4801 I-635 at Dallas Pkwy. F:$55(island)$60(wall) A:$2 10am-5pm, Bulldog Productions 214-350-4305

VIRGINIA

MAR 29 VA, VIRGINIA BEACH, Comic Book Convention, Pavilion Convention Center, 1000 19th St. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

APR 4 VA, NORFOLK, Reality Comic Book Convention, Quality Inn, Lake Wright, 6280 Northampton Blvd. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

APR 26 VA, RICHMOND, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, 6531 W.Broad St. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

MAY 16 VA, ARLINGTON, Comic Book Convention, Howard Johnson, 2650 Jefferson Davis Hwy. A:$4, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

WASHINGTON

APR 12 WA, SEATTLE, Center Con 23, Seattle Center Exhibition Hall. T:125 F:$60 A:$3 10:30am-4:30pm, Carl Waluconis 206-822-5709

WASHINGTON, D.C.

APR 26 DC, Comic Book Convention, Tysosns Corner, Ramada Hotel. Great Eastern Conventions 908-788-6845

ATTENTION SHOW PROMOTERS

Having a show? Convention listings in the Wizard Show Calendar are free. Send us:

The name of the show,
Date and hours,
Location and address,
# of tables with prices,
Admission charge,
Contact name and number.

Send to:
Wizard Show Calendar
P.O. Box 648
Nanuet, NY 10954-0648

For certainty of placement, please send info 6 weeks prior to month of show. Please print clearly. Do not send flyers instead if information if possible.

Gareb Shamus, Publisher Doug Goldstein, Asst. Editor

Magic WORDS

Wizard Press P. O. Box 648 Nanuet, NY 10954-0648

Have you ever written to a letters page before? Did you want to but didn't know how? Or just afraid to try? Well, have no fear, Magic Words is here! Write us a letter about anything- we may not have the space to print every letter we get, but no matter who you are, where you live, or how silly your letter is, we're gonna try to give you a personal response (no, not some stupid "Thanks for writing" message, we mean we're gonna answer your questions personally). So send us your questions and suggestions right now. If you aren't sure what to say, here's some good examples:

To Wizard,

Thank you for making the best magazine ever created. From a scale of 1-10 I would say you scored 100. Your magazine is absolutely PERFECT!! 'nuff said. Going on to the very important subject. I don't think John Byrne should change Archangel back into Angel because Angel is just a man with feathery wings while Archangel has metal wings, neuro darts, supersonic speed, and the chaotic ego. He can recognize Archangel with his mask down can't he? If Archangel does get transformed, he will surely lose popularity, unless he has some other power. I'm glad that's over, now about your magazine interviews. I think you should interview the red-hot mutant artist Whilce Portacio and Jim Lee. I bet your magazine would be worth something. Now, could you please answer these questions: 1) In Wizard 6 I thought there was supposed to be a review of the X-Men movie. I was really looking forward to it. WHAT HAPPENED? 2) Why are there mutants with the same powers? Take for instance Rogue, Bishop and Gideon. What would happen if they face off against each other? 3) Finally, in *X-Factor* 62, the end of the X-Tinction Agenda, the sparkle of Warlock's ashes were merged with Doug, right? Or is it just the moon shining on it? Well, this is how much I like your magazine. Please print this. Until you guys lose your company in the year 3000, make mine WIZARD.

Bernard Magno
Honolulu, HI

We're losing our company in 3000? Who have you been talking to? Oh well, I might as well answer your questions since that's a ways off. 1) The X-Men movie review was bumped to issue #7 when we received a last-minute article on the new Batman sequel. Hope you liked them both, as well as that Whilce Portacio interview last month. 2) If Rogue, Bishop and Gideon fought each other, well, it wouldn't be too exciting but Rogue would win 'cause she's the cutest. 3) Who knows, Bernard, who knows?

Dear Magic Words,

I absolutely love Wizard, although I missed issue #1 and #2 because they were sold out before I could get to them. I finally got smart and got a subscription, wish I had done it sooner. It's a fabulous mag. The letter page is especially good and I usually read it first.

Now to my questions: 1) In issue #4, did you guys print the CBIQ before *Iron Man* #275 (in which Mandarin loses his hands)? If not then question #26 was wrong. 2) How do they get the infinity gems on and off the gauntlet and people's foreheads? Crazy glue and nail polish remover? 3) On Marvel Series II trading card #160 (back), there are seven power ratings but only six people shown. Who's above Nightcrawler in the Metahuman space?

Keep up the good work until 3000 and beyond!

Mark Gregory
Charlotte, NC

3000 and beyond? Much better. 1) Of course we read *Iron Man* #275 (How cool was that story? No more Mandarin, I guess). 2) Yes. 3) We went through all of the Marvel Series II cards and nobody has an agility rating of 7. Weird, huh? Those ratings get kind of silly, though (for instance, I hardly think that Bucky has a higher stamina than Galactus).

Dear Wizard,

I hate the fact that every other comic seems to guest-star Wolverine - the biggest dork in the omniverse!!

Now for some questions, if you don't mind. 1) Why is Cable so stupid? 2) Why is Gambit so stupid? 3) Why is Wolverine so stupid? 4) Why does every other *X-Men* feature a villain from Wolverine's realistic, unending past? 5) Will you print all of this complaining? 6) Will someone do the universe a favor and kill Wolverine? 7) What ever happened to Caliban? 8) Since when was Cable telekinetic or whatever he is? 9) Why should Cyclops be tortured with a son like Cable? 10) If Sabretooth is Wolverine's father, why didn't he use a condom?!?

Thanks for tolerating all this.

Brian Harrod
Toledo, OH

Good gravy, there's someone in the world that doesn't like mutants! Is that possible? Brian, for being so unique, here's your answers: 1) I dunno. 2) Because he's French. 3) I dunno. 4) I dunno. 5) Probably. 6) Probably

not. 7) Apocalypse transformed him into a very strong creature called the Hound or something in the *X-Factor* book a while ago. He now works for Apocalypse. 8) He first showed his powers (exactly what they are is still undefined) in *X-Force* #1. 9) I dunno. 10) Since Wolverine and Sabretooth are at least 100 years old (maybe a lot more), they probably didn't have condoms back when he could have used one.

Magic Words,

Correct me if I'm wrong, but shouldn't the hype on *Uncanny X-Men* #282 be rightfully placed on *Uncanny* #283? History proves that the cameo first appearance of a new hero isn't worth as much as his/her first full story. For example: *Hulk* #180 - first cameo Wolverine, list price $75.00. *Hulk* #181 - first full story, list price $265.00.

One more thing. Please explain why *Uncanny* #281 has two different logos, one white, one purple. Nowhere on the comic does it read second print, although I've heard rumors of the white logo being recalled and the purple was the second print.

Bob D. Ray
Austin, TX

You're right about Bishop's first appearance. We've re-done the listing in the price guide, but if people actually put a heavier demand on *Uncanny X-Men* #283 remains to be seen. About *Uncanny* #281: The first print has a white logo, and Marvel tried to recall it because it was supposed to have a metallic cover, but didn't. The second print is purple.

Dear Master Magicians,

First, let me start by saying "I hate your magazine." Your book has completely taken the comic industry by storm, and proclaimed itself the supreme authority. I say this because for the last six months I have been watching your "Wizard Comic Watch" section religiously and every time I journey to my local comic shops to pick up an issue featured in your mag, I find that the issue is sold out (which I knew had been there for months on end, with nobody touching them, or giving them a second thought, including me!) or the book has risen in price dramatically in just one week! It's disgusting! And it's starting to give me a class A headache! But, my modest, but highly intelligent solution to this problem is simple, and the answer is (drum roll please) "Don't Sell Your Magazine!" Well, not to the public, anyway. They don't deserve the right to know what's going on. I don't want to rate your book in any category. Why try? Nobody should mess with perfection, but I think I will anyway. I have just one complaint - More! More more more more more! More Comic Watch previews, longer artist interviews, more pictures of artists, more pages to your magazine! Second, I have a question that I need your help to answer. About two weeks ago, I bought *Quasar* #32. I don't normally buy this book but it was part 3 of Operation Galactic Storm and that's why I picked it up. Now, last week I caught this other book out of the corner of my eye. It is actually *Quasar* #32, but it says #1 on the cover. When I opened the book to see what was in it I glanced at the indicia and it says it's #32. I looked through the whole stack of *Quasar* #32s and found a total of four copies with #1 on the cover, what gives? Did Marvel make an error? Finally some covers I'd like to see: 1) Polaris using her powers done by Larry Stroman (I think he does a bad Polaris). 2) A Cable cover by Liefeld. 3) An Electro cover by Erik Larsen. 4) A Warlock cover by Angel Medina, and 5) A Judge Dredd cover by Simon Bisley.

I'm outta here.

Dave Krueger
Chicago, IL

Dave, thanks for hating us. I wish more people did. About those *Quasars* - *Quasar* is a direct market book (meaning it only goes to the comic shops). Marvel wanted the Galactic Storm issues to go on to the news stand as well, and since they're the first *Quasars* to do so, Marvel labelled them #1 instead of #32. It still says #32 in the inside because there's no getting around the fact that it IS #32. I hope that clears things up, and you'll be happy to see Rob Liefeld's Cable/Shaft cover for next month's issue. Also, Simon Bisley is working on a cover for us right now, but I can't say of who (here's a hint - Lobo).

Dear Wizard,

Okay. Here's what I'm going to do (and if this letter's grammatically incorrect, suck a lemon). Instead of going and giving you a card to print my letter, I'm going to bring up a stupid question so you may humiliate me in front of the entire world (and my friends, too). "Who is the Beyonder?" My friends keep mentioning him and I just have to stare and nod. Now be nice and print this letter and I don't mind if you send me a complimentary issue.

Charter Morris
Greenville, MS

Gee, the chance to humiliate someone is better than any bribe a guy could get, you know? Well, my friend, let me tell you something that everybody in the world already knows, and that you as a comic fan must be very inattentive, or blind, to have missed. Ready? Listening? Here goes. The Beyonder was a living universe that got bored, and accidentally discovered our universe and found it interesting. He took a lot of heroes and villains off the Earth and made them fight each other on another planet (this was *Secret Wars*). After this ended, the Beyonder was so interested in us that he took human form and came to Earth (this was *Secret Wars II*). At the end of this, he was killed when he tried to give up all of his powers and become a normal person, and the machine he made to do so was damaged in the process during an attack from most of Marvel's super-heroes. Later, in the issues of *Fantastic Four*, he was revived and merged with the Molecule Man to form a new Cosmic Cube (which was called Secret Wars III but was incredibly stupid). Clear things up for you?

Dear Wiz,

I'm a 22 year old collector who began collecting comics when I was 8. I've seen a lot of gimmicks over the years, but this one takes the cake. I recently purchased the *Lobo Slipcase Package* and was greatly disappointed when I opened it. Inside was *Lobo's Greatest Hits*, a compilation of some of Lobo's guest appearances, *The Last Czarnian* story, 8 postcards, and The *Wisdom of Lobo* book.

When I opened the *Wisdom* book I found 50 blank pages, much to my chagrin. There was nothing in it at all, just blank paper. Needless to say I was, and still am, very mad. I returned to the store I purchased it from and asked for my money back. My friend Shawn, who owns the store, didn't believe me when I told him. He said he heard about a practical joke DC was playing on Lobo fans, but this is too much.

Just because DC lost the big

summer comic war is not an excuse for such shoddy treatment of the comic buying public. With 14 covers on *Robin II* and now this it appears as if DC is jumping hip deep into the hype pool to recoup its losses from this summer. I was told by Shawn that I could purchase the *Last Czarnian* graphic novel for $9 and *Greatest Hits* for the same price. Slipcase cost $29.95. This means I paid probably $2.95 for the postcards and $9 for a pad of paper in the guise of a book! Lobo fans: beware! Take that $30 and purchase some good comic books, you will be much happier.

A word to DC- many other collectors I have talked to are very dissatisfied. I am considering to cease purchasing DC Comics due to this fraud. I would like to hear other fans opinions on this matter.

Thank you for providing this arena to vent my frustrations.

Jimm Sutton
Kingman, AZ

A sales gimmick is a means to get people interested in your book enough to buy it, or to hype it up in a way that you'll buy more than one. Multiple covers or special holograms could do that. However, selling a book that has no pages in it does not do that. It was not a gimmick. It could only have been a joke, then. What wasn't funny is that it was unannounced, and people expected a 50 page Lobo story. The result of this joke was not humor, but anger towards DC for what seemed like, to many fans including Jimm here, a rip-off. Please, DC Comics... think before you do things.

Dear Wizard Staff,

I'd like to thank you on your excellent job in the few first issues! They were spectacular! What more could you possibly ask for in a guide? But what could a 13 year old who has over 2500 comics know?

I happen to be wondering about the new Jim Lee X-Men card series. How many holograms will be found in the set? I enjoy your toy guide featured in the pages of the Wizard. I mean, it's nice to know you bought a toy a long time ago and broke it, only to find out it's worth close to one hundred bucks!! By the way, why doesn't your toy guide of the Marvel Superheroes list Venom, or the Juggernaut?! Thanos seems to be rippin' through the pages of comics. He's rather an excellent role model for little children, don't you think? "Billy, come and drink your milk and you'll grow up big and strong to rule the universe!" By the way, what issue was Thanos' first appearance? I'd like to get it before anyone else does, but thanks to this question, everyone else already knows (if you answer it, of course)! Until Thanos grows some hair, I'll continue to buy the Wizard monthly magazine.

Justin Lee
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Thanks, Justin. I've never been so happy that Thanos is bald (his first appearance, with or without hair, was *Iron Man* #55 - which already is a white-hot book selling in the area of $100). Here's your answers: Jim Lee's X-Men cards will have 5 holograms. The Toy Guide section now lists the Venom figure, and hopefully, as time goes on, every figure ever made will be listed as we get the space (well, we'd need a lot of space).

Dear Wizard,

Firstly, I would like to give you guys a big congrats on your most excellent mag. Now I would like to ask you Wizard-Browner-Smartypants some very serious (not) questions: 1) Will Todd McFarlane ever become a monthly artist again? 2) I missed your "Draw Your Own Cover" contest. Will you ever have another drawing type contest? 3) Besides Todd McFarlane and Dale Keown, please tell me some more Canadian Marvel artists. 4) Will McFarlane and Liefeld's Overkill ever be in X-Force, Youngblood or Spawn? Answer these questions, or *SNIKT* get the nastiest boo boo you ever had!

Clayton Chorneyko
Scarboro, Ontario, Canada

Browner-Smartypants? That's not nice at all (heck, I don't even know what it means). Anyway, 1)Of course... he's doing *Spawn* for Image Press. 2)Our cover contest is now a monthly feature, so you didn't miss it. Also, check out page 63 for a whole *new* contest. 3)In his earlier, carefree years, John Byrne had some dealings in Canada. 4) Overkill will probably never be a Marvel character, but if Todd and Rob want to put them in their new Image Press books, it's up to them.

Dear Wizards,

In issue #6 of your wonderful magazine, I read Mike Cecchini's letter to you all that stated his beliefs on the creation of everyone's favorite mutant/ninja/berserker, Wolverine. Mike's theory was that Wolvie was given his adamantium skeleton and claws by the X-Factor villain known as Apocalypse. He provides excellent back-up for his claim by sighting evidence from *Wolverine: The Jungle Adventure* and the Weapon X storyline that ran in *Marvel Comics Presents* #72-84. Well, there is more proof that Apocalypse is responsible for Wolverine's claws than Poof can shake a wand at.

Apocalypse's most famous creation is Archangel and if you check *X-Men* #242, Wolvie reacts to the 'Angel by thinking, "Angel—his scent—something about it—familiar—pain—sweet mercy, the pain!" and in *X-Men* #272, "Something about each of us makes the other nuts." Think about it, Apocalypse takes mutants, like Archangel, War, and Caliban, and transforms them into total killing machines using mechanical and genetic devices like the ones shown in Weapon X. All of Apocalypse's servants are transformed from boring, tired mutants into living razors of death that serve no purpose but to eliminate the weak. However, Archangel escaped from Apocalypse, but he still fights an inner battle everyday to control his deadly wings and his bloodlust. Does this sound like a certain sales phenomena?

The loophole in Mike's and my theory is that if Apocalypse wanted to create Wolverine, why didn't he just do it himself instead of going through the whole *Weapon X* affair? Ask Barry Windsor-Smith. You have to remember that comics are not fact but fiction. If I am right about Wolverine's origin and Marvel doesn't want Wolvie's history to be known, they can just tell their writers to change the story. But that won't change the fact that, for the moment, I am correct and all readers can finally get a good night's sleep because they know that only Apocalypse can tell them why Wolverine goes "SNIKT!"

Jason Ginsburg
Houston, TX

Hey, this is getting scary. Have we actually discovered the true origin of Wolverine? Those are some really good clues, Jason. A big Wizard thanks to you and Frederick Gelinas of Chelsea, Quebec and David Tedeschi of Staten Island, NY for pointing them all out. We'll keep everybody posted if any more news or info breaks out.

Dear Magic Words,

Why has *X-Men* #201 gone from "possibly" to "definitely" the first appearance of Cable? The only reason anyone made the Cable/Cyclops' son connection is Cable's being called Nathan, which MAY NOT be his real name. Cable may have gained this name through interacting with Mr. Sinister; he's the reason Cyclops' son was named Nathan, and Sinister's skill in cloning could explain Stryfe's similarity to Cable. Also, consider this: Cable and Cyclops have both been in three storylines together (Days of Future Present, X-Tinction Agenda, and Kings of Pain), yet Cable never reacted to his would-be father. And in Days of Future Present, Cable met his would-be younger self without so much as a thought balloon in response. Further, in that same storyline, Cyclops' son can already create some force field bubble; Why can't Cable do the same? Lastly, right before being sent into the future in *X-Factor* #68, a look at page 16 shows that Apocalypse's virus had infected young Nathan's right eye while leaving his left eye intact. Yet Cable's right eye is fine, and his left one is replaced with cybernetics. All in all, the case for Nathan Summers being Cable seems quite flawed.

P.S. I'm enclosing $7 worth of Star Trek cards, as a gift. Quid pro quo would suggest that a suitable return gift would be printing this letter.

Draeger Martinez
Austin, TX

Holy smokes, that's a whole mess of Star Trek cards (gee, all the cool ones, too)! Well, Draeger, that quid pro quo didn't work against Hannibal Lecter, and it doesn't work against us either (um, actually it does but don't tell anyone). I hope you and the way-too-many others out there who've been mailing Star Trek cards with their letters know that we've got to send them all back (but heck, if you guys out there in Wizard-land can think of a cool bribe that we couldn't possibly send back to you, well, who knows what can happen. Hint: Iron Man, Iron Man, Iron Man). What we can't send back is your strong argument against Cable being Cyclops' son. You've got some good points. However, Marvel never did care much for continuity so I can safely say that the Cyclops/Cable rumors from Marvel HQ are growing stronger every week. So there.

Fabulous LetterArt

Thanks for the terrific letter art. Every month our diehard fans with talent to burn adorn their praise (or complaints), sometimes, we think, just to get a little extra attention. Guess what. It works. Here's four for this month!

From David Chun Granada Hills, California

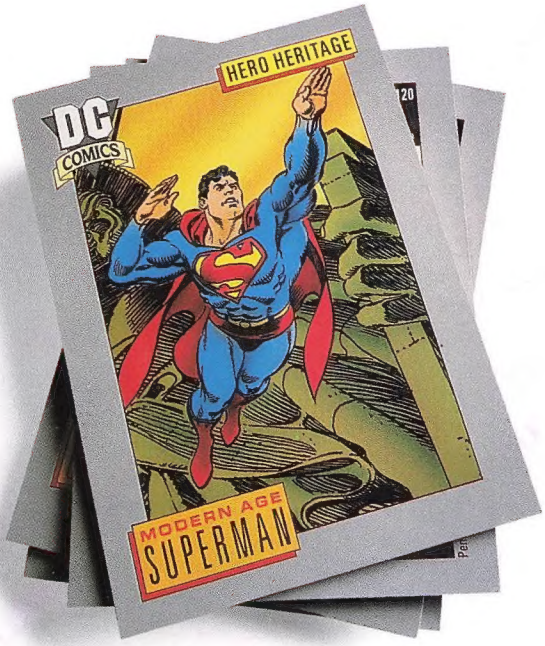
From Rich Hennemann Gardner, Massachusetts

From Bernie Redahan San Fransisco, California

From Tom Whalen McAdoo, Pennsylvania

Next Issue

A Rob Liefeld cover, you say? Of ***Cable***, you say? Well, we here at Wizard: The Guide To Really Cool Covers can only say YOU GOT IT! Not only that, but Cable is side-by-side with Shaft, a member of Rob's hot new Youngblood team (and if you decide to look past the cover, we're giving this issue over 200 pages with interviews galore, including one with our friend Mr. Liefeld. We've also thrown in a very special Youngblood #0 trading card! All this without raising the cover price!!) What more could you ask for in a guide?



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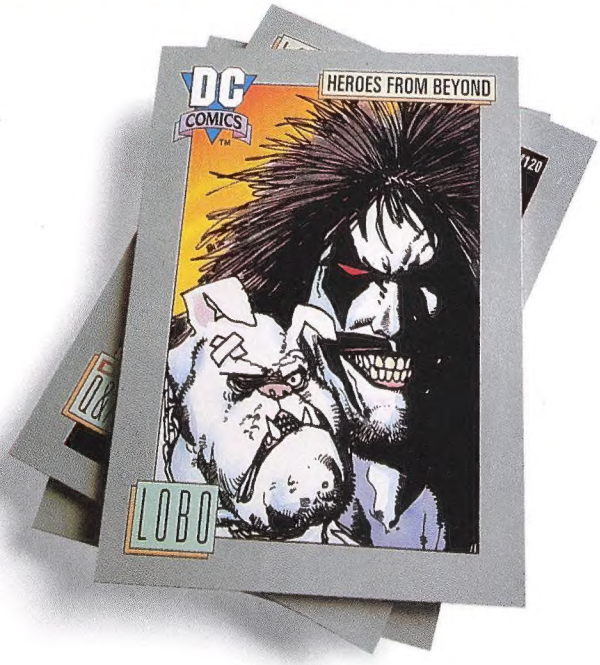

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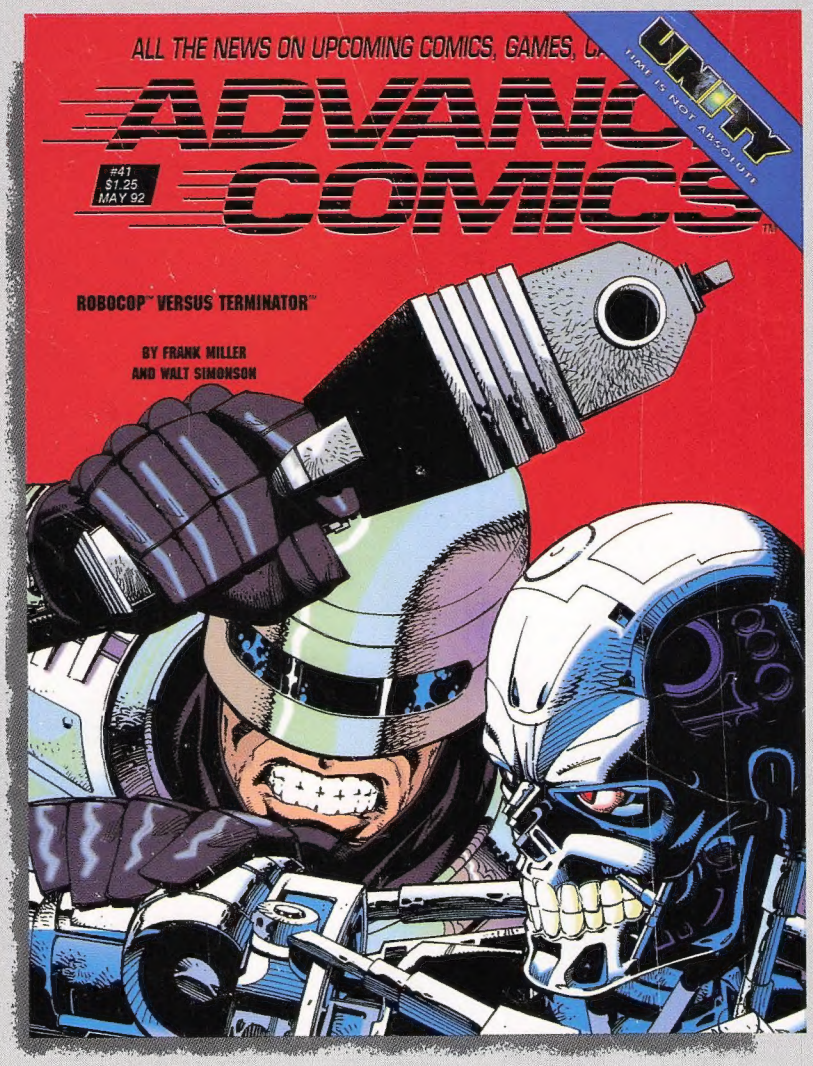

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